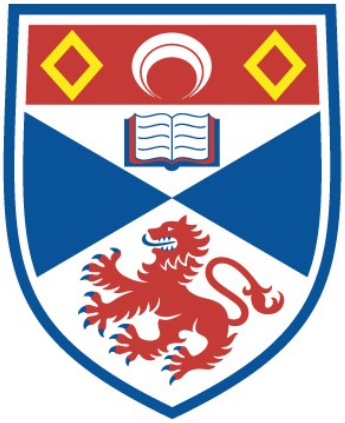
# PRINCIPAL SIR JAMES DONALDSON:
## EDUCATION AND POLITICAL PATRONAGE IN VICTORIAN SCOTLAND

A. Scott Lowson

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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# PRINCIPAL SIR JAMES DONALDSON

## Education and Political Patronage in Victorian Scotland

A thesis submitted to the
University of St Andrews
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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## DECLARATION

I, Albert Scott Lowson, declare:

1. THAT I was admitted as a Research Student pursuant to Ordinance 12 in October 1985 and as a candidate for the degree of PhD in April 1986, the higher study for which was under the supervision of Professor C.T. Smout, Department of Scottish History United College of St Salvator and St Leonard, University of St Andrews;

2. THAT the research contained in this thesis was carried out by me;

3. THAT the thesis is my own writing; and

4. THAT no part of this work has been previously submitted for a higher degree.

## CERTIFICATION

I certify that the candidate has fulfilled conditions of the Resolution and Regulations relevant to the degree of PhD of the University of St Andrews and that he is qualified to submit the thesis pursuant thereto

Professor T.C. Smout

ABSTRACT

This thesis evaluates the career of James Donaldson whose life spans the long ascendancy of the Liberal Party in Scotland. Particular attention is accorded his contribution to Scottish education - at primary, secondary and University level - and the significance of political alignment in determining appointees to many positions atthis time. Donaldson's life illustrates how social mobility could be achieved in Victorian Scotland when the structure of Scottish society presented features distinguishing it from that in England and which tended to seriously impede upward movement. Yet neither poverty nor illegitimacy necessarily proved insurmountable handicaps when ability attracted the benevolent interest of men enjoying influence and connection in the educational world.

Recognizing Donaldson's potential, men of established position ensured his appointment to positions worthy of his talents. This - patronage seeking nothing in return beyond the satisfaction of helping an able young man move ahead despite a disadvantaged background - led on to the benefits of political patronage which opened to Donaldson consequent on his friendship with Lord Rosebery. Such patronage, while securing positions for the favoured, was in the nature of reward for services rendered. Men like Professor John Blackie ensured Donaldson's rise to the forefront of the professional middle class but it was access to the influence and connections of the nobility which facilitated his promotion from a rector - albeit of the most prestigious burgh school in Scotland - to the much smaller academic world of the Scottish Universities and effortlessly admitted him to the world of the still essentially landed aristocracy who with their interconnected webs of relationships and connections exercised a dominating influence in the social and political life of Britain.

From original sources not only is Donaldson's stature as a Scottish educationalist for a period exceeding sixty years unequivocally established but also the extent and importance, formerly unappreciated, of his involvement in the high summer of Liberal politics.

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# INTRODUCTION

History with its flickering lamp stumbles along the trail of the past, trying to reconstruct its scenes, to revive its echoes, and kindle with pale gleams the passion of former days. What is the worth of all this? The only guide to a man is his conscience. The only shield to his memory is the rectitude and sincerity of his actions. It is very imprudent to walk through life without this shield, because we are so often mocked by the failure of our hopes and the upsetting of our calculations; but with this shield, however the fates may play, we march always in the ranks of honour.

Winston Churchill

James Donaldson was born in Aberdeen just over a hundred and fifty years ago. It was a world far removed from that which we know today: society was dominated by a leisured landed class which, although small, had successfully reserved to itself effective political power, and class distinctions were accepted unquestioningly by the great majority as unalterable and inescapable features of the social order. Yet, although the structure of society appeared immutable, with social demarcations accorded sharp definition, opportunities for social mobility nonetheless existed. The hurdles confronting anyone of lowly background intent on gaining an entrée to the upper ten thousand were indeed formidable. The upper class in Britain was never a caste - unlike its counterparts in many European countries, determined to rigidly enforce their archaic social demands and jealously guarding their privileges until ultimately these were wrested violently from them - always exhibiting a certain fluidity and an adaptability to changing conditions, an almost Lamarckian evolution, to which may be ascribed its survival. Although the process was carefully controlled, new members were continually admitted once such potential, and invariably eager, recruits had unequivocally demonstrated their conformity to the corporately determined code of outlook and behaviour.

Social mobility was evidenced at all levels of society but James Donaldson's achievement was particularly striking. Born a stranger to any generous providence - denied even legitimacy - he was to rise to intimate friendship with peers and prominent Society hostesses, with government ministers and the foremost politicans of his day and to be a welcome habitué at many of the great country houses and fashionable London drawing-rooms. How was this possible? For Donaldson's success

two factors were responsible - firstly, his choice of career as an educationalist and, secondly, the position and reputation he achieved as a result enabled him to attract the attention of the Victorian patronage system. It was to these related circumstances that he owed his spectacular social advancement.

Many of Donaldson's attitudes and much of his orientation - in religion, politics, education - were conditioned by the environment of his boyhood and adolescence in Aberdeen and were to remain strong throughout his life. Acknowledged as a scholar of international stature, from the mid eighteen fifties until his death sixty years later he was tirelessly involved in the movements for educational reform, of both schools and Universities. Concurrently, he was writing prolifically on an extensive range of topics relating to education at a time when the expanding professional and commercial class was pressuring for changes in Scotland's traditional system of education to meet the needs of the age and demanding schools and Universities which enjoyed - and conferred on those educated therein - the prestige associated with the English public schools and with Oxford and Cambridge. He worked determinedly to promote and elevate the training of teachers, parallelling similar contemporary movements in other professions bent on gaining increased recognition for their members and imposing recognized standards for membership of professional bodies. Writers concerned with aspects of the Scottish educational scene in the latter part of the nineteenth century have referred to Donaldson as a prominent educationalist of his time - for example Robert Anderson in his Education and Opportunity in Victorian Scotland, George Elder Davie's, The Democratic Intellect and by James Scotland in The History of Education in Scotland but nowhere

is his work considered either in depth or comprehensively. For the first time Donaldson is accorded a central place in educational changes and developments in mid and late Victorian Scotland and at a century's remove his contribution is recognised as substantial and diverse.

Important as was his work in this field, there is a further aspect of his career which has never formerly been examined: his life assumes a broader significance when viewed in the context of Victorian political patronage. In theory the meritocracy of learning which had been Scotland's pride since the Reformation and which had established a tradition of respect for scholarship independent of social background, presupposed a democratic accessibility to academic positions. The reality was very different for patronage could override merit in determining the appointee. The meek were promised a Heavenly inheritance but without someone to give a push in their favour, the prospects of advancement on earth were seriously restricted.

J.M. Bourne, in his study of patronage in England in the last century, has written that "The idea of a general decline in patronage parallel with the suppression of sinecures and the destruction of the "influence of the Crown' is fundamentally misconceived."[1] On the contrary, other aspects of patronage flourished, for many of the political, social and economic changes attendant on Britain's emergence as the foremost industrial nation and the greatest imperial power the world had known, enormously increased the opportunities for exercising patronage. There was, however, an important distinction between the positions which were within the gift of patronage in the eighteenth century and those of the succeeding century, namely, that the salaried positions which were

1. J.M. Bourne, Patronage and Society in Nineteenth Century England, (Lond., 1986), p.21. With the exception of the few which survived as anachronims, sinecures had been virtually abolished by 1835.

now the subject of appointment through patronage had become progressively restricted to offices in which the appointee had real and often very responsible work to perform and for which relevant experience and qualifications were necessary - the importance Victorians attached to "efficiency" militated against appointing the stupid, idle or plain incompetent - an increasing awareness of social responsibility acknowledged that to do so was simply impractical. Subject to the foregoing qualifications, patronage was an accepted fact of life; it was, in short, the way things were done. There are a number of informed studies of political history of this period such as I.G.C. Hutchison's A Political History of Scotland, 1832-1924, a comprehensive review of politics in which the survival of patronage is evident. But in all these, patronage is peripheral to the main thrust of the work. Many biographies, memoirs, letters and diaries of this era when the favour of the nobility retained an importance impossible to imagine today, reveal in varying degrees the significance of patronage but often it is implied rather than explicit and without considering its bilateral nature. The reason for patronage invariably being relegated to this marginal and unemphasised place is that it does not fit neatly into any exclusively social, political or economic division since the interconnecting webs of influence, relationships and associations in which patronage flourished were not limited by any such categorising boundaries. Bourne's study is concerned with patronage as it functioned in the English social structure; Scottish society, however, was not analogous to that south of the Border for the absence of a large and rapidly expanding middle class until much later than its emergency in England severely restricted opportunities for social advancement. References to patronage convey an understanding

of what it is and how it functioned in general terms but Donaldson's career affords a remarkably complete illustration of how the system worked, not in terms of classes or groups, but as exemplified in the life of an individual.

That the subject is more usually considered in the context of the former is the consequence of two related factors. Firstly, there were few individuals whose careers could be presented in studies in patronage; many enjoyed advancement which owed much to the operation of patronage but fewer were the subject of such continuing and striking patronage as Donaldson's life exhibits. Secondly, only in rare instances has sufficient documentary material survived to enable the functioning of patronage in an individual's life to be fully reconstructed. For while patronage was an obvious and accepted feature of Victorian life that is not to imply that it was necessarily overt; even when not extending to the corrupt or illegal it was often conspiratorial with both patron and recipient having a vested interest in not disclosing patronage's tracks on the premise that what the World did not know would not trouble it. Further, since by its very nature it was something intimate and personal, the workings of patronage were frequently expedited through conversation and the extended systems which bound together upper class society. Before the widespread use of the telephone, the upper class - frequently as an antidote to the extreme ennui with which it was often visited as the price of a leisured life - indulged in prolific correspondence with the manoeuvering for patronage among its topics. But such valuable source material is singularly vulnerable to the ravages of time and the depredations of man for letters were often thought not worth preserving or their recipients - or heirs - believed that discretion

would be better served by their destruction.[1] Donaldson's life, however, largely escapes both these limiting conditions; patronage is evident as a continuing and significant factor throughout his career and sufficient material has survived to trace not only its operation but also the services which he rendered his most important patron, Lord Rosebery, in exchange.

Donaldson had enjoyed the benefits of patronage before his relationship with Rosebery began in 1879. While a student at Marischal College he had learned the value and uses of patronage and, moreover, that to manipulate the system to one's own advantage was not considered discreditable. On the contrary, patronage was - by those fortunate enough to secure it - a weapon to be wielded, vigorously, unashamedly and without quarter in battles for academic advancement. Patronage was not, in itself, corrupt but it was constantly abused and such an easy prey to corruption that the temptation often proved irresistible. Such patronage struggles had their winners but as Donaldson's story reveals, they also had their innocent victims; those whose only fault was to present themselves as candidates could be remorselessly passed over and ignored, regardless of the validity of their claims. In the face of patronage an assessment of the relative merits of contenders was reduced to an irrelevance.

The patronage which promoted Donaldson's career during the first half of his life was more limited in scope and different in nature from that which later followed from his friendship with Rosebery. In those earlier days, his engaging personality, demonstrable academic ability and prodigious capacity for work attracted the attention of older and

1. A pertinent example of this fate is Rosebery's destruction of all the letters he sent Donaldson and all Donaldson's letters to Lady Rosebery.

well placed men who directed their influence for his advantage. This was patronage which sought nothing in return beyond the satisfaction of helping a young man move ahead. With Rosebery it was different: Donaldson set out - one suspects with calculated determination - to make himself useful, even indispensable, with services for which the patronage of the Liberals' rising star was the quid pro quo. The position which Donaldson had earned in Edinburgh's educational milieu recommended him to the bibliophile Earl and a friendship having its genesis in a mutual interest in old Scottish books developed into a close political association. Against the background of the Liberal Government's reluctant imbroglio in the Sudan and later Gladsone's schismatic determination to give Ireland Home Rule, the mild and unassuming Donaldson eagerly cast himself in the role of intelligence agent and sometimes backstairs intriguer as he moved with urbane ease from country house to London drawing room, from the High Commissioner's Court at Holyrood to dinner at the Reform Club and to the same end cultivated friendships with the Editors of The Scotman and The Times. His reward would be a Regius Chair at Aberdeen followed by the Principalship of St Andrews. Services rendered, however, were not the only price he paid - known for being the eyes and ears for Rosebery, his go-between, and having with him a privileged relationship there were those who saw in Donaldson an émminence gris and he would discover the cost exacted in jealousy, envy, resentment and animosity.

Donaldson's career casts a new and illuminating light on Rosebery who has been the subject of two biographies. The first of these, by the Marquess of Crewe, appeared in 1933: not suprisingly, the relationship of the author - political colleague and son-in-law - and its proximity to Rosebery's death account for the two volumes being laudatory and

superficial. More recently, R.R. James, with the advantage of greater detachment and lengthier historical perspective, has written a substantial and balanced study. In both of these Donaldson is accorded only a brief mention, Crewe merely describing him as "His (Rosebery's) Edinburgh friend, Professor Donaldson". It might readily be inferred that Donaldson amounted to little more in Rosebery's life than a provincial hanger-on, a social climber of the sort that prominent and wealthy members of the aristocracy helplessly attracted. Certainly the often obsequious expression of Donaldson's letters to his patron suggests that he was in a permanent state of genuflexion at the mere thought of him but it can be established that Donaldson was in fact deeply and sincerely dedicated to promoting Rosebery's political career. The noble lord, in his independence, interests and outlook, was a true patrician to the extent of being an anachronism in his own time, exhibiting an eighteenth century image of nobility with his disdain of concession or compromise. Yet it is now apparent that, despite his anxiety to remain aloof from the demeaning exigencies which late Victorian politics were increasingly demanding, Rosebery was not averse to someone else undertaking to mould opinion in his favour and engaging in political manoeuverings for his benefit.

The combination of earnest scholarship and the assiduous cultivation of a patron successfully secured an entry to the highest echelons of Society; he was indeed "in" it but he could never pretend to be "of" it. The most that Donaldson would do to remedy this and simultaneously to consolidate his social position was to marry into the upper class. With his second marriage this is precisely what he did. In Victorian upper class ideology marriage was the only career open to a woman, just as it offered the only means of improving her social position, to which

end the Season and its elaborate social and courtship conventions had been carefully contrived. Yet it was exceedingly rare for a man to bridge by marriage any significant disparity in social origins. Donaldson's life illustrates how this could be achieved but more was needed than finding a way across the social chasm. For one thing, the strictly controlled life of marriagable upper class girls effectively ensured that they met potential husbands only from within the recognized frontiers of their class. But Donaldson faced a more insuperable barrier to acceptability; he would have been unthinkable as a first husband for Mary Christie since it would have been impossible for him to keep her in the style to which she had been accustomed at home, a dominating consideration with upper class parents. This was less a reflection on his salary - rarely were current or potential earnings accorded any weight - than the recognition that it would have been impossible for him to provide any capital towards a marriage settlement which, notwithstanding the gradual removal of the restrictions on a married woman's capacity to own property, was accorded great importance by parents in deciding what constituted a suitable marriage partner for a daughter. Upper class Victorian girls might have their concept of marriage coloured by gothic romance but their parents were uncompromisingly practical about financial realities. Donaldson's marriage to a woman born and bred in the upper class world was only possible because she enjoyed the financial independence conferred by two earlier marriage settlements, thereby enabling him to maintain an establishment and style of life which his Principal's salary along could never have supported. Like Asquith's marriages, Donaldson's two wives represented widely different backgrounds and social aspirations, yet each was admirably suited to be his wife at different stages of his career.

His Principalship which was to prove lengthy and memorable, began in singularly inauspicious circumstances. The means which had secured his appointment and the Government's apparent indifference to other well qualified aspirants caused Donaldson to assume the direction of the University with many of the Professoriate resentful of his preferment and unreconciled to his appointment. In addition, the continued viability of the University which had been questioned for many years was still in doubt and its dissolution remained a real possibility. In time, however, he was to earn widespread respect for his patience and forbearance, tact and quiet confidence in handling the prolonged and bitter strife which affected the University over the proposed union with University College, Dundee. Donaldson was Principal for over a decade and approaching seventy before there was an outbreak of peace in St Andrews and energies, trammelled for so long, at last could be directed, unhindered, towards developing the University to meet the demands of the twentieth century. This study does not purport to record the history of the University during Donaldson's Principalship but rather considers his participation during these years in the reforms affecting education and, against a broader canvas, in events which were shaping the history of Britain.

With the union with the Dundee College accomplished, the troubled years were left behind and Donaldson was vouchsafed to enjoy the long evening of his life as an active and revered academic figure, his words accorded respectful, almost pontifical, attention and to share the lavish social life of the Edwardian haute monde. Donaldson's life - from obscure origins and working class struggle to a prominent position amidst upper class affluence - encompassed many interests, interconnected and

often interdependent; attempting to evaluate his work in any single area to the exclusion of the remainder would be to present a portrait not only incomplete but distorted and unbalanced. Such would be less than he deserves for the sum of his life's oeuvre far exceeds that of its various parts. This is the testament of one man's professional and social achievement set against the backdrop of his times and as such bequeathes a significant and pertinent historical record.

# CHAPTER 1

James Donaldson was born on 26 April 1831. The Dictionary of National Biography states that he entered this world in Aberdeen and some contemporaries believed he had been born in Blackfriars Street.[1] As a boy his home was in the neighbourhood and much later his mother lived in Blackfriars Street but to what extent the belief that he was born there was funded on a not unreasonable presumption and how much it owed to Donaldson himself can never be determined but that he countenanced this harmless deception and was content that Aberdeen be credited as his birthplace can only have been because this was preferable to the truth. For there is no evidence that he was born in that northern town nor, indeed, anywhere near it.[2]

His mother, Christina, was the daughter of a crofter, Angus McKay, but where this grandfather's croft was situated is unknown. Christina MaKay was born in either 1810 or 1811 but there is no record of her birth in any of the crofting counties nor in those to which the term might more loosely be extended. All that can be discovered today is that somewhere on that April day this young highland lass bore a son. Of her child's father nothing is known beyond his name, James Donaldson, and, if the records of Marischal College are to be believed, that he was an engineer - "Machinarum fabricatoris" - and died before his son became a student there in 1846.[3] No record can be traced of a marriage between Christina McKay and James Donaldson and no one of

1. Interamna Borealis, Ed. W.K. Leask, (Aber., 1917), p.171.
2. There is no record of a James Donaldson having been born around 1831 in the Mormon Indexes of Old Parish Registers for Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Banff, Caithness, Clackmananshire, Dundee, Glasgow, Inverness, Kincardine, Kinross, Moray, Nairn, Orkney, Ross and Cromarty, Shetland and Sutherland. Indexes for the remaining counties are not yet available.
3. Records of Marischal College and University, Vol. II, (Aber., 1898) p.535.

the latter name is recorded as having died between Donaldson's birth and 1846.[1] Indeed, where the young Donaldson spent the first decade of his life is equally obscure; although he may have been living in Aberdeen earlier, there is no evidence of him there before 1842[2], when he became a pupil at the Grammar School. Also about this time he and his mother became members of one of the recently formed Congregational Chapels and the coincidence may indicate that they had just arrived in Aberdeen and that the educational opportunities of the town were responsible for the move. That they joined the Congregational flock may not be without significance for the Congregationalists could be counted on to be more charitably disposed and forgiving towards any young woman who had manifestly fallen short of the narrow moral code resolutely demanded by the Calvinist Kirk. For the indications are that when her child was conceived and born, Christina McKay had no husband.

The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed enormous population movements across Scotland; changes in the traditional rural economy - highland clearances were widely enforced where the McKay crofting communities were most populous, in Caithness and Ross and Cromarty - and the

1. Neither was any James Donaldson enfranchised in Aberdeen following the Scottish Reform Act of 1832, nor does the name appear in the Aberdeen Directories of the period but such omissions are not to be accorded undue significance. For inclusion in the Directory, the onus rested with the individual who had no incentive to secure an entry if he did not believe that this might offer him some advantage. The Reform Act has a greater claim to be remembered for initiating parliamentary reform, a process which would not be fully accomplished for amost a century, rather than the decidedly limited extension of the franchise which it effected. However even this modest increase to include the substantial farmers in the counties and the shopkeepers and better off artisans in the burghs raised the electorate in Scotland from less than 5000 to over 60,000. G.S. Pryde, Scotland from 1603 to the Present Day, (Edin., 1962), p.194.

2. Aberdeen Grammar School Roll of Pupils, 1795-1919, (Aber., 1923), p.16.

inexorable pull of the towns where developing industries called for labour, occasioned unprecedented demographic change as the old order was compelled to yield of the new. Of course, the old Parish records have no pretension to being complete, especially those covering outlying country areas; it is, however, much less probable that a birth in Aberdeen would have escaped recording. That no record can be traced for a marriage of his parents or for his own birth might indicate no more than the consequence of imperfect records and the present state of their organisation[1]; only when interpreted in conjunction with the weight of other cumulative evidence and circumstances can they be considered to render him illegitimate. It is remarkable that among his voluminous papers, Donaldson left not a single reference to either of his parents or to any childhood home and when much later he penned a brief autobiographical sketch, he chose to begin with his entry to Marischal College at the age of fifteen. Moreover, when his mother later married, she did so in the name of Christina McKay with no acknowledgement of any previous marriage.[2] Where Donaldson's birth occurred is unknown but it must surely have been the circumstances rather than the location which were responsible for him ensuring that the darkness of an Egypt night which covers the event should remain forever inviolate.

Donaldson never, even in the days of heady social success, pretended to other than the most humble origins. Certainly by 1842 he was living

1. It is possible that when the Mormon Indexes of Old Parish Registers are completed for the whole of Scotland, a record of Donaldson's birth may be found.
2. Although the difficulty involved in checking records and the general conditions of the time facilitated bigamy, there are no grounds to believe that Christina McKay would not have disclosed an earlier marriage when to do so would have denied her son legitimacy.

in the Green,[1] one of the oldest parts of Aberdeen. All available evidence suggests that the familiar name is a curiously perpetuated error and ought to be, not the Green, but Green Street or Greengait for it had through eight centuries formed part of the main road from the south and west into the town. The traveller to Aberdeen came upon the Green through a narrow entry but the street widened out just as it does today into a triangular shape, branching off in the left corner into a wynd or vennel leading to the Netherkirkgait and on the right by the wider Shiprow, round the southern side of St. Katherine's Hill to the Castlegate and so to the heart of the town. The features of the Green familiar to Donaldson as a boy had remained unchanged for at least two centuries but its importance other than in an historical sense had disappeared when Union Street was laid out in 1800. The Green was relegated to a backwater under the lee of the new thoroughfare which so loomed above it that a favourite diversion of the town rowdies in the early nineteenth century was to annoy the inhabitants of the Green by throwing offensive material down their chimneys. Bypassed, the Green became a refuge for the town's unwashed poor struggling to eke an existence in their overcrowded homes, jammed together with newcomers from the rural hinterland, the flotsam and jetsam of a society in the throes of rapid social change.

It is to this environment that Donaldson can first be traced. Whether he and his mother lived alone or shared a home with others or with some of his mother's relatives[2] in an extended family situation can never be known but their financial state may well have been more complex than

1. A.S. Cook, Pen Sketches and Reminiscences of Sixty Years, (Aber., 1901), p.24.

2. The Aberdeen Directory for 1841-42 records one, George McKay, Slater, living at 93 Green. While the name may be only a coincidence, it is possible that this was a relative of Christina McKay with whom she and her child made their home.

such a working class background suggests. Donaldson bore his father's name and, although this was not general practice for a child born out of wedlock, neither was it unusual.[1] More importantly, the use of this patronymic, rather than his mother's name, declares a strong probability that his father acknowledged him as his child and may have contributed towards the support of mother and child and later made some provision for the boy's education. That Christina McKay was able, not only to send her child to the Grammar School, for which fees had to be found, but in addition that on leaving there he was able to proceed immediately to the University prompts the question of how this was possible. Whatever importance she attached to securing an education for her child,[2] for a young woman of peasant stock, with no means of her own and most likely a minimal education, if that, and no other support, the sheer economic necessity for the way to earn a wage, however small but as soon as possible, would have precluded all possibility of such an education; for a truly poverty stricken family anything beyond the most elementary education could never have been contemplated.

And yet is the premise that Donaldson's father contributed to the financial support of him and his mother consistent with one who earned

1. Pertinent examples are provided by Ramsay MacDonald (1867-1937) born in a Lossiemouth "but and ben" and James McBey (1883-1959) the famous etcher and painter, born in a cottage in the little village of Newburgh, seventeen miles north of Aberdeen. The former was the son of the head ploughman on a farm near Elgin, the latter of a comfortably off Aberdeenshire farmer. The farmer made a small contribution over the years towards his son's support; the ploughman could no nothing for his.
2. It is probable that her own opportunity of education had been limited. Although Donaldson and his mother were separated by distance for over thirty years not line of her hand has been preserved. It is possible that his mother was illiterate or, like Ramsay MacDonald's mother, only semi-literate.

his living as an engineer? At a time when industrialisation was giving rise to many new skills and redirecting others, the term "engineer" was accessible to broad interpretation. Donaldson's father was designated "machinarum fabricatoris", most likely describing a manual worker practising some of the mechanical skills increasingly in demand in industries being transformed as the result of mechanical invention, innovation and development. Whether he was engaged in the construction or maintenance of machinery, whether his skills were utilised in the mills or docks or any of the other multiple situations where they were in demand there is no way of discovering but that does not preclude an assessment of just how humble an occupation this was at that time. From a study of the occupations of the employed in Glasgow in 1831, the year Donaldson was born, it has been estimated that the unskilled - defined to include not only those who required no skills whatsoever for their work but also those who stepped into jobs totally untrained and could master them, with virtually no training, within a few weeks - probably accounted for one in two or one in three of the employed population.[1] A skilled artisan, such as an engineer, enjoyed an earning capacity above that of the agricultural worker who, redundant to the rural economy as a consequence of the agrarian revolution and often simultaneously dispossessed, drifted to the towns, or those employed in unskilled manual labour, and conspicuously above the wider range of servant labour. Indeed, anyone possessing the skills encompassed by the term "engineer" in a society increasingly dependent on mechanisation must have been on the upper margin of the working class. For that class, however, life was a precarious existence and small gains in social position swiftly lost with the death of the breadwinner. If Donaldson's father contributed financially this would have peremptorily ceased on his death and

1. T.C. Smout, A History of the Scottish People, 1560-1830, (Lond., 1969), p.396-7.

Christina McKay and her son thrown into dire financial straits. We do not know how early in Donaldson's life his father died, only that Marischal College evidently accepted that his demise occurred before his son became a student, but without corroborative evidence, there is no reason why this should be accepted as fact. If, as seems likely, Donaldson had no personal knowledge of his father, to state that a living father was dead - and he may genuinely have believed him dead - would avoid awkward questions while entailing no change in their circumstances: such a convenient untruth would successfully lay a ghost without in any way affecting that ghost's ability to remit money. But such reasoning can only be sustained while we credit Donaldson's father as being single - a presumption defying the balance of probability - since anyone who today would be described as a mechanic would not have the means, whatever his inclinations, to support two households.

If we are accessible to doubt about the time of this elusive father's demise, we need have no hesitation in similarily doubting his supposed occupation. A dead father who had been a mechanic was plausible, raising neither eyebrows nor speculation, but he may have been something very different. In later life, Donaldson was regarded as having arrived, socially, from nowhere - in terms of his background this was true but genetically it may have been wide of the mark. Donaldson's father could have been a man of some means. Many interesting scenarios can be imagined but none can be promoted from speculation to fact. The truth is that Donaldson's birth, origins and early life remain a mystery, and that they defy exposure is the consequence of him drawing a blackout curtain over these happenings for which he had no responsibility, by the eminently sensible policy, passive rather than active, of merely refraining from

ever referring to these years and allowing the world to preserve, uncorrected, its presumptions of birthplace and legitimacy. It was a policy which would prove remarkably successful.

Whether Donaldson arrived in Aberdeen in 1842 or earlier, this thriving and important city was to provide his environment until 1850. It has long been an important port and one of the main centres of Scottish fishing - both for the Arctic whalers and the herring fleets - as well as coastal shipping and trade with the ports of northern Europe, the commercial centre of the north east of Scotland and, more recently, it had earned a reputation for its expanding textile industry. Nothing is known of Donaldson's education before he appeared at Aberdeen Grammar School; if in the country he probably attended a parish school, in Aberdeen it would more likely have been a denominational school, but that he received some elementary education is virtually certain since it was assumed when boys entered the Grammar School, usually between eight and twelve years old - Donaldson was eleven and a half - that the necessary grounding in English, reading and writing had already been mastered.

The Grammar School was then situated in Schoolhill, a district deriving its name from the street in which stood the public Grammar School of the town[1]. The building in which Donaldson was to be taught for the following four years had been erected in 1757. This low, single storey building innocent of the least architectural pretensions was slated and considered a notable advance on its heather thatched predecessor. Since no importance was attached to the provision of a playground - the building was set close behind the enclosing railings - when any recreation demanded space the boys crowded out to the street or down

1. Many of the pupils who had passed through the school distinguished themselves in later life including the 5th Lord Byron who became a pupil in 1798.

to the nearby Denburn. The Denburn Valley through which the railway would soon run witnessed many a stone-fight between the Grammar School boys and the boys of the town when it was not unusual for one of the youthful and enthusiastic participants to be carried unconscious from the fray.[1]

Inside, the school was dingy, low and bare; each of the four oblong classrooms had in one corner a raised desk for the master and along opposite sides were two rows of what were known as "factions" - wooden seats with narrow sloping writing benches "all slashed and notched and carved over with names and initials of various dates deeply incised into the hard wood"[2] provoking a degree of interest in the legends of the school - leaving a broad passage down the middle of the room up and down which the master might choose to walk during the course of a lesson. At this northern latitude, where the light fails early on winter afternoons, an effort at artificial light was provided by large wheel chandeliers holding about a dozen candles which each cast a feeble glow over the benches beneath. By today's ideas of classroom comfort it seems depressingly bleak and cheerless, yet Donaldson must surely have been happy there for years later he described the Grammar School as "a nice, cosy, small place."3

In view of Donaldson's subsequent career, it is instructive to consider the education which the Grammar School provided. It was exclusively a day school directed to providing a classical education and

1. Bon Record, Records and Reminiscences of Aberdeen Grammar School by Many Writers, (Edin., 1996), p. 231. The School in the "Thirties", Rev. John Sutherland, a pupil 1833-37. The railway reached Aberdeen in 1859.
2. Ibid: p.206. "James Melvin," Professor D.M. Masson, a pupil 1835-35.
3. Quoted in Interamnia Borealis, Ed. W.K. Leask, (Aber. 1917), P. 172

was regarded as a "feeder" for the nearly Marischal College. This was a classical education interpreted within the most narrow margins; no English, history or geography whatsoever was taught and so literal was their exclusion that the closest the school came to affording any instruction to boys of nine or ten years old was the reading, for some time after entering the lowest class, of a chapter of the bible every morning. In the early 1820s the rudiments of Greek had been introduced for the higher classes, but "with this exception, and with the further exception that, in teaching Latin, the masters might regale their classes with whatever little bits of history or general lore they could blend with their Latin classes, the business of the school was Latin, Latin, Latin."[1]

In the estimation of the time, however, Aberdeen boys like Donaldson and his fellows were receiving the very best education known and for this privilege they were committed to a four or five years' course of being drilled in Latin, five hours every schoolday except for the single holiday month of July. The Rector of the Grammar School from 1826 until his death in 1853 was Dr James Melvin. Although Donaldson has left no reference to Melvin as a teacher[2], he resembled the latter so closely in background, in scholarship and the regard in which he was held in both school and University community - descriptions of Melvin might have been written, equally and without modification, of Donaldson - the inference that Donaldson was influenced by him is irresistible. Melvin had been born in Aberdeen in 1794, like Donaldson of poor parents:

1. Bon Record, Records and Reminiscences of Aberdeen Grammar School by Many Writers, (Edin., 1906), p.207. "James Melvin," Professor D.M. Masson, a pupil 1832-1835.
2. One of the earliest items which Donaldson preserved is a small notebook containing a Version - translation - and in which at the time he recorded that it was given to his class as an examination by Melvin St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 10/64.

after being educated at the Grammar School and Marischal College and a period teaching at Udny, he had at the age of thirty two been appointed Rector, when "his knowledge of Latinity was probably already more extensive, original, deep, and delicate, than that of any other scholar within the limits of North Britain."[1] A Latin Grammar he compiled went into several editions and in addition to teaching the senior classes at the school he lectured in Latin at Marischal College - he was styled Lecturer in Humanity, there being then no regular or endowed Latin Chair - held a licentiate of the Established Church of Scotland and for his work for the University received an LLD.[2]

These parallels - Donaldson also came from a poor background, was educated thrugh the Grammar School and Marischal College, appointed a Rector at an even younger age after training for the church, wrote acclaimed scholarly works and became Professor of Humanity at Aberdeen - are interesting but by themselves would be no more than that. It is when these are viewed in alignment with their remarkably congruent personalities that the true extent of the resemblance is apparent. Disfigured by smallpox, the name "Grim" or "Grim Plut" had early been conferred on Melvin and "Here's Grim" would be whispered as he entered the School. He was held in great awe which owed not a little to the strict and perfect order he kept, even when he was teaching two classes simultaneously. This he achieved "by sheer moral impressiveness, and a power of rebuke, either by a mere glance and word together, in which he was masterly. As a born ruler of boys, Arnold himself cannot have

1. Bon Record, Records and Reminiscences of Aberdeen Grammar School byMany Writers, (Edin., 1906), p.218, "James Melvin", Professor D.M. Masson.
2. He bequeathed his renowned collection of books to Marischal College and today forms the Melvin Library in Aberdeen University.

surpassed Melvin . . . His influences was so high tones and strict that, even had he taught nothing expressly, it would have been a moral benefit for a boy to have been within it."[1] Donaldson was also to be likened to Arnold and while Melvin was less generously endowed with that humour and charm which were to be so marked in Donaldson there are strong grounds to suggest that this example influenced him when came himself to give expression to the schoolmaster's rôle.

Here then, in this environment and with Melvin's personality and authority pervading the whole school, young Donaldson grappled each day with a few select classical writers, chiefly Caesar and Livy among the prose writers, with Virgil, Horace and Buchanan's Psalms among the Poets. The amount read each day was not great - seldom exceeding a page - but every sentence was gone over at least five times, "first it would be read aloud, then translated word for word with the utmost literality, then rendered as a whole more freely and elegantly but still with no permission of that slovenly and soul ruining practice of translation which is called 'giving the spirit of the original!'"[2] Such was the education which filled Donaldson's schooldays. Although the full curriculum extended to five years, it was unusual for bright or impatient boys to go on to the University at the end of their fourth year and this is precisely what Donaldson did; he left the Grammar School in 1846 when he won a Cargill Bursary to Marischal College.

When Donaldson became a student in the late autumn of that year - he was fifteen and a half - Aberdeen enjoyed the singular distinction of having two Universities, each possessing its own statutory rights

1. Ibid: p.220-221.
2. Bon Record, p.222.

and degree conferring privileges.[1] His choice of Marischal College was predictable for a pattern had been established over many years whereby boys from outside Aberdeen favoured King's College while those from the Grammar School inclined towards Marischal College. Donaldson, like many of the students entering the Scottish Universities, began his studies with the intention of ultimately being ordained. However, whereas the great majority of his contemporaries with the church in view aimed at ordaination in the Established Church of Scotland or the Free Church, Donaldson and his mother were Congregationalists.

In the early eighteen forties they had become members of Blackfriars Chapel where the young Donaldson attended the Sabbath School; the class, occupying the north west pew in the gallery was taught by one William Munro, a worthy shoemaker. The Chapel, only recently established, never entertained the least pretensions to being socially smart. Quite the opposite. Blackfriars Street, in which it was situated, was close to the Green, the narrow streets and wynds of the neighbourhood comprising a teeming, noisy and squalid slum. Many who flocked to the Congregational Chapels had erred and strayed from the Established Church, alienated by preoccupation with exacting penance and contrititon for sins found out. Circumstances and the weaknesses of human nature might shut them out from the respectability of the Kirk but the Congregationalists were eager to convince them that such exclusion did not cut them off from the love of God and His promise of redemption.

The area around Blackfriars and the Green provided a mission field on the Chapel's doorstep when in 1836 there arrived a young minister -

1. King's College in New Aberdeen had been founded by William Elphinstone, Bishop of Aberdeen, under a papal Bull in 1494. Marischal College in new Aberdeen by George Keith, Fifth Earl Marischal of Scotland by a Charter of 1593.

he was only twenty two - who was to have a profound influence on the adolescent Donaldson. The Reverend John Kennedy came from a deeply religious family, his father having trained as an evangelist under the Haldane brothers before establishing an Independant or, as they were later called, Congregational Church at Aberfeldy in the early years of the century.[1] Kennedy combined his forceful evangelism with enthusiasm and intellect and soon the impact of his "well-studied yet direct and simple sermons, (and) his transparent integrity of character, . . . drew round him a large and devoted congregation"[2] and his ten years' ministry at Blackfriars was to be memorable not only in the annals of that church but also in the ecclesiastical history of Aberdeen.[3] Kennedy attracted enormous congregations many of whom were young people, with whom he was particularly adept at speaking and who flocked in unprecedented numbers to hear him; of these, "the little flower of the young manhood of the city",[4] many were destined to become prominent men. Demonstrating an energy and able leadership which matched his enthusiasm, he campaigned for the repeal of the Corn Laws, worked for the emancipation of the negro slaves, promoted the British and Foreign Bible Society, supported temperence reform and encouraged ragged schools.

Whether Donaldson's mother had become a Congregationalist on joining Greyfriars or had transferred her allegience from one of the other three Congregational Chapels then in Aberdeen is obscure but what is certain

1. Congregational Year Book, 1901, p.192.
2. Ibid: p.193.
3. St. Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Box 6/7. Unidentified newspaper cutting, undated, late nineteenth century.
4. Interamna Borealis, Edited W.K. Leask, (Aber. 1917), p.171.

is that religion was accorded a central rôle in his home life before this time. In common with numbers of working class children throughout Scotland the Bible was associated with Donaldson's earliest recollections for it was the most important - indeed often the only - book in humble homes, an intimate companion to the elders and reverently read aloud in the evenings and on the Sabbath. "My heart" he recalled, " was susceptible from my childhood as far as I can remember to ardent enthusiasm whenever I heard the Bible stories relation to me."[1] But it was to John Kennedy that he owed his awareness of religion having a dimension beyond the stories of childhood. At this period of strong evangelism it was popular to experience a sudden conversion, a traumatic occurence reminiscent of the experience of Paul, which forced on the sinner's consciousness the realisation of the error of his life and turned him to the footsteps of Christ. Although Donaldson never knew anything of this nature, he could however, clearly recall the circumstances when the religious impressions of childhood came to have a more profound significance. This was in 1842 when, attending the Sabbath School in Blackfriars Street, "often would my soul be fired"[2] by Kennedy; with his forceful personality and intense religious conviction, his passionate preaching was imbued with an emotional and dramatic impact to equal East Lynne. On the eleven year old Donaldson it scored a direct hit - "The anecdotes that were told of the young who had accepted Christ and especially the feeling narration of the happy deathbed experiences

1. DWL: Ms 359/3i, James Donaldson, application to New College, London, late August or early September 1859.
2. DWL: Ms 359/3i, James Donaldson application to New College, London late August or early September 1859.

of the lambs of Christ's flock acted powerfully on my mind and urged me to struggle with might and main against sin."[1] The compassion of a child, simple and spontaneous, drew him to the church but it was Kennedy who bound him to its wheel. Donaldson was intelligent, enquiring, without the companionship of siblings at home, and Kennedy's strong and gifted personality made a deep impresion on him. That same year he began regularly to spend Saturday afternoons at Kennedy's house in Denburn Terrace, and later in Silver Street, a practice he would continue as long as Kennedy remained in Aberdeen[2]. There, Donaldson would confide and share his youthful enthusiasms[3], talk and browse through books for notwithstanding Kennedy's active involvement on so many fronts, he also had scholarly interests which he encouraged others to share. Not yet thirty, Kennedy was unfailingly encouraging and ever ready with sensible advice: he must indeed have been, as Donaldson described him, "the best and wisest friend I had in those days."[4] A strong bond readily developed between them, Kennedy readily assuming a rôle betwixt surrogate elder brother and parent, and he was soon taking Donaldson with him when he went home to his family who had been living in Inverness since his father began ministering there after leaving Aberfeldy in 1825. Kennedy's younger brother, James, ordained in Blackfriars in 1838, had left for India as a missionary the following year but their only sister, Margaret, younger than her brothers, lived at home with her parents. Like her brother, Margaret Donaldson was to exert a strong influence on Donaldson's life.

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid: Ms 359/7, letter from John Kennedy to Council of New College, London, undated (August 1850).
3. These included filling small notebooks with details of Kennedy's sermons. St. Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 10/641, dated 1843.
4. Interamna Borealis, Edited W.K. Leask, p.172.

Donaldson had good reason to admire this young clergyman who, labouring tirelessly for multiple and diverse phila_nthropic causes, could yet find time to express a real, benevolent and generous interest in a young boy. When Donaldson described these years as walking with joy in the Christian course[1] he might as easily, and without inaccuracy, have described this as the Kennedy course for with the limited perception of youth the Congregational Church and John Kennedy were mutually inclusive terms. To Donaldson during these years, Kennedy was the Church.

A bitter dispute, the Morisonian controversy, now erupted among Congregationalists over a question of dogma. This particular schism was concerned with whether Christ died for all men or only for the elect - what was known as the doctrine of divine grace - and examplified the truly extraordinary intolerance, arrogance and irrelevance which is such a marked feature of the history of Scottish Presbyterianism. In Aberdeen, in 1846, a breakaway Evangelical Union Church was formed in St Paul's Street, just round the corner from Blackfriars Street where the new congregation was soon thriving, drawing many of its members from the existing Congregational chapels in the city and especially from Blackfriars. Kennedy apparently found the situation intolerable and resolved to leave Aberdeen whereupon the London Missionary Society of which he had been a Director since 1843, invited him to go as a missionary to China. Only the opposition of his parents to losing both their surviving sons to the distant mission field dissuaded him from accepting but before the end of the year he had left Aberdeen to become minister of the ancient Stepney Meeting House in East London.

1. DWL: Ms 359/3i, Donaldson's application to New College, London late August or early September 1850.

Notwithstanding his idol's departure, Donaldson and his mother remained faithful to Blackfriars Chapel but he joined the St Paul's Street Debating Society which, since it was exclusively concerned with religious topics, was most likely associated with the Evangelical Union Church there. In connection with the Society, Donaldson wrote essays which must have demanded considerable time and effort, covering page after page in his small tight handwriting. The earliest to survive is dated June 1848 and entitled The Divinity of Christianity proved from the Classical Writers during the First Two Centuries of the Christian Era[1]; the seventeen year old Donaldson was undaunted by such subjects and confidently took them in his stride. His essays vividly capture the religious intensity which permeated Aberdeen at this time and Donaldson did not fail in either zeal or conviction; the following is from his writing on the verse "For the Corruptible must put on incorruption, and the mortal must put on immortality":[2]

"The history of our early existence will and does derive vast interest from the fact that it is but the beginning of our everlasting existence . . . Unbeliever, what will be your recollection in Hell? . . You will not forget the sins which you are now committing against God. Ah no. The days of judgment will reveal them all to you - and though you may try to stop your ears now, alas! you must listen then. Suppose a murderer had to pass over a river into which he had thrown the body of one whom he had murdered. Imagine his feelings, O what horror, what dread! What agonised bursts of sorrow - what sting of conscience. He sees the murdered one rise up against him. He is the slave of the most excruciating fear. You shall be afflicted with far greater, infinitely greater horror and suffering as every sin which you have committed. O sinner think for a little on this awful theme, and if you have the least compassion for yourself, if you wish to spare yourself an eternity of misery - come to Jesus. . . . You may tremble sinner and

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 10/88E.
2. Corinthians, Chapter XV, Verse 53.

make yourself believe that such a destiny does not await you. This is a great delusion. You are deceiving yourself. You are making your disappointment in hell the greater, the more poignant. O turn then while you are still in the land of hope."[1]

It was this saturating nature of religion - even at the remove of well over a century the like of this page after page conveys an almost frightening, indeed chilling, quality - that conditioned every reponse in the world in which Donaldson was growing up. Yet this intensity went hand in hand with knowledge for he also reveals a remarkable exegetical capacity.

Donaldson remained on close terms with the other members of the Kennedy family and in 1848 after staying with them in Inverness he and Margaret began to write to each other. She kept his letters, the earliest to survive, and they are of interest for the ideas and introspective doubts which they express. While it is apparent that the regard Donaldson felt for her brother was extended to Margaret, the admiration he felt for her intellectual accomplishments - she wrote articles and read Carlyle and Gilfillan - and the difference in this ages - Margaret was several years' his senior - cast her naturally in the rôle of mentor. The mainstay of their correspondence was books and religious topics; nowhere is there any suggestion of romantic attachement. "My words cannot express," he wrote to her on 26 February 1849, " - my heart can scarcely feel gratitude enough for your kind and instructive letters."[2]

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 64C/10.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 14/12 letter to Margaret Kennedy 26 February 1849. The previous month he acknowledged". . . you have considerable influence over me.". Ibid: letter to Margaret Kennedy, 1 December 1848.

The previous December he had confided to her "My mind has expanded a little - immensely in comparison with former years (thanks to you and other kind friends) but alas! how much time has been misspent - how feeble have my attempts been to realise heaven within my soul - how miserable my progress to goodness and greatness."[1] This need for confession and self criticism is a recurrent theme, reflecting the Congregational emphasis on the personal relationship between the individual and God, and discloses something of the nature of this relationship as well as providing a subjective pen sketch of Donaldson's personality.

"I must confess to you with deep sorrow" he admitted, "that I once felt a coldness to you which I must have displayed in my words and actions. Before I went to Inverness, I never liked you because you were good - I felt a sort of liking to you because you were fond of books - in other respects I did not like you." In expiation he continued, "You would oblige me extremely much by frankly stating all the faults and deficiencies which you perceived in me - while I was in Inverness - I am naturally very obstinate and have an extremely good opinion of myself - but I am so far in the right road that I will take every hint I can get. You must tell me all my faults of every sort and description - and do not entertain the least fear of offending . . the truth is that my prevailing fault is a too high opinion of myself - and perhaps you who have obtained so complete a mastery of yourself, will give your young friend some useful admonitions on the subject." 2

This self portrait is totally at variance with the student Donaldson that his contemporaries remembered.

However important religion might be in Aberdeen it did not have a total monopoly of Donaldson's interest for he and his student friends

1. Ibid: letter to Margaret Kennedy, 2 December 1848.
2. Ibid: Margaret's reply had demonstrated her greater maturity as Donaldson's subsequent letter indicated: "I thank you for your forgiveness of my past offences against you - quite in the style of a good, - I was going to write, ideal lady, you have attempted to shift the blame on yourself . . . but you have not told me my faults.". Ibid: letter to Margaret Kennedy, undated.

were also increasingly aware of politics, attending meetings about the Corn Laws and listening to Chartist orators.[1] He had been conscious of politics while still a schoolboy and, considering the political complexion of the environment which nurtured his formative years, that he was to enter the Liberal fold is not surprising. Nowhere had the consequences of the Reform Act been more immediate, extensive and enduring than in Scotland. Since the Union in 1707, the Tories had invariably secured a majority in Scotland: at the first election held under the extended franchise, late in 1832, the Liberals won forty three of the fifty three Scottish seats[2]. The progressive ideas which the increased electorates now had the means to express dominated Scottish politics and ensured that for the remainder of the century the Liberals would never fail to have a majority in Scotland where the Tories had a much narrower appeal; the absence of a substantial and growing middle class militated against them developing a large electoral base. His social background made it highly probable that he would become a Liberal but there were also other factors, grounded in the umbrella nature of the party, which so reinforced the probability as to make it virtually inescapable, for as Professor Pryde concisely expressed it,

> "(The Liberals) formed, not so much a single political party in the twentieth century sense, as a loose confederacy of allied groups of individuals, ranging from the reactionary to the radical . . . The dissenters and evangelicals were Liberal almost to a man, as were inevitably, the free traders, so that religion and economics buttressed the support of a political creed, giving it a moral and philosophical, as well as a secular, content." 3.

1. Alma Mater, magazine of Aberdeen University, (1906).
2. The 1832 Act increased the Scottish representation from the forty five seats provided by the Act of Union.
3. G.S. Pryde, Scotland from 1603 to the Present Day, (Edin., 1962), p.197.

Opposition to the Tories had steadily mounted throughout the years of Donaldson's youth as agitation increased against the Corn Laws, which ensured for the landowners and farmers a market protected against cheap imported grain. The consequences of such protection were, however, very different for the working class during years of trade depression, rapidly increasing population and the social and economic dislocation experienced by a society undergong fundamental changes. Over the breadth of the country, many were reduced to the edge of starvation and living in appalling conditions. The political equation - over simplified but readily understandable - was clear: poverty and its attendant suffering were the result of the Corn Laws and these had been introduced and were being maintained by the Tories in the interest of the landed class. Thus Donaldson's background and his family's fidelity to a dissenting church ensured that his political destination was the Liberal Party. He could arrive there either by a natural and progressive realisation of the importance of politics or by a sudden conversion occasioned by a specific experience. For Donaldson it had been the latter.

One day while he was still a schoolboy, as he was passing a room, he discovered men practising drill exercises with muskets. His interest immediately aroused and knowing one of participants he had asked what it was all about and in response was invited to a forthcoming meeting. The sight of these men with firearms promised excitement and determined not to miss the sequel, he got the watchword and duly went to the hall where the meeting was to be held. This must have been a Chartist Rally for the movement enjoyed a strong following in Aberdeen at this time and the gathering of the desperate victims of an unfeeling social and

economic policy made an enduring impression on Donaldson who, even in old age, could still vividly recall the last words of the speaker. "Have your muskets ready," he had adjured those who filled the hall, "The day of retribution is at hand, and we shall have vengeance on those who have deprived us of wives and children, of our bread and the fruits of our labours."[1] From this experience, conjoined with his identification with the disadvantaged, was born his unfaltering faith in Liberalism. Whether his allegiance was won quite so dramatically as he professed is questionable for it was to be another thirty years before he became actively involved in Liberal politics and then the stimulus was to come from startlingly different circumstances.

When not studying or involved in church activities or on the periphery of a political meeting Donaldson could often be found on market day searching the stalls for second hand books. The booth keepers brought in from the surrounding country anything that was saleable: among the old iron and worn clothes he began his lifelong love of books by rummaging for rare editions and he always remembered the days when his patience was rewarded, such as when he discovered a beautiful volume of Latin authors from the press of the famous Parisian printer Badius Ascensius for a single penny and on another occasion the Psalms and Tragedies of Buchanan for fourpence.[2] He was caught up, too, in the occupations of the student body, becoming involved in student societies which, not surprisingly, often had an association with the classics. The object of one of which he became a member was to study the work of Tacitus,

1. Advertiser, Dundee, 17 September 1903. Donaldson recounted this experience of a Liberal Rally in St. Andrews on the eve of the 1903 bye-election in the St Andrews Burghs.
2. Alma Mater, Magazine of Aberdeen University, (1906).

the students enthusiastically reading the whole of the Annals and Histories and then considering the trustworthiness and language of the historian. Another was the Hellenic Society founded by Professor John Blackie for the study of Greek.

Blackie was the most colourful figure in the academic Scotland of his day - a long one, too, for he remained active until his death in 1895 - with a personality as original as his appearance; his soft collar à Byron and tartan plaid over his shoulder were deemed outré affectations by contemporary professors who conformed to the unexciting dress dictated by Victorian middle class society as appropriate for the professional man. His indomitable vitality, alertness in academic and literary matters, interest in Scottish culture, wide sympathy and good nature were combined with what a later member of his Hellenic Society described as "a complete disregard of convention, a youthful and almost boyish . . . rowdyism, which detracted somewhat from dignity and bearing, and an eccentricity which sometimes bordered closely on buffoonery, perhaps originally assumed, but ultimately natural."[1] Donaldson recalled that in 1848, when revolutions were breaking out all over Europe, Blackie arrived to give a lecture, excitedly brandishing the most recent edition of the Illustrated London News. The friendship which developed between Donaldson as a young student and this flamboyant, larger than life, Professor was to endure until Blackie's death. Donaldson had become a student late in 1846, exactly coinciding with John Kennedy's departure for London and the void this left in Donaldson's life was soon largely to be filled by Blackie who was ever hospitable, and generous with advice and encouragement. Moreover, while fun to be with he was also

1. J. Kerr, Memories Grave and Gay, (Edin., & Lond., 1903), P.243-244.

decidedly interesting. Born in 1809, he had as a young man scratched a living writing reviews until in 1839 he had been, as he chose to describe it, "smuggled into the academic world"[1], the circumstances of which he made no secret and afforded Donaldson with an early lesson on the importance of patronage.

Blackie's father had been an intimate friend of the Liberal Member for Aberdeen, Alexander Bannerman, who, anxious to do something for Marischal College, persuaded Lord John Russell, the most prominent Minister in Lord Melbourne's Government, to endow a Latin Chair there and to appoint as the first Professor the thirty year old Blackie. The Aberdonians confidently anticipated that Melvin, already "lecturer" at Marischal College, would be appointed. The institution of the Chair and the simultaneous appointment of Blackie caused such a furore in Aberdeen that it was remembered and spoken of for years afterwards. Blackie was not only an example to Donaldson of the importance of influence in securing an appointment, but, equally importantly, that such use of patronage was not to be considered in any way wrong or discreditable, for as Blackie shamelessly explained it, "According to the traditional policy of all free government the local member could not be expected to make a new situation for the purpose of rewarding a political opponent: so that the Aberdonians who expected that Dr Melvin, the Rector of the Grammar School, should be promoted to the Profesorship, had no reason to complain."[2] Melvin, unlike Blackie, was a Tory; "the matter declared a Whig job, and a Whig job it undoubtedly was,"[3] Blackie

1. J.S. Blackie, Notes of a Life, (Edin., 1910), p.116.
2. Ibid: p.118.
3. Ibid.

announced with disarming honesty. While under no illusions as to why he had been appointed he had no difficulty in persuading himself that his qualifications for the chair were indubitably better that Melvin's, asserting that "in respect of general scholarship, literary accomplishment and knowledge of the world, with my advantages I must have been a very poor creature indeed if I was not far superior to the school master."[1] Anyone sceptical of his self assessment certainly was left in no doubt as to the dimensions of his ego which modesty never inhibited him advertising.

This was the man to whom can be attributed Donaldson's profound and lifelong interest in the classics and the history of the ancient world. Blackie's Hellenic Society made no pretence at being a democratic student society, for the membership was exclusive. He selected from his Latin class a few of the most promising students who with a few adult scholars were invited to spend evenings in Blackie's home where he put into practice his belief that the Greek classics should be read for pleasure and social enjoyment rather than as a minute critical exercise. Donaldson earned his membership of the Society by demonstrating the academic potential which Blackie was adept at identifying but in addition the latter may have been on the lookout for this particular student since in April 1846 John Kennedy had married Helen Stodart Blackie, the Professor' sister.

It was with Blackie encouragement[2] that Donaldson took an active

1. J.S. Blackie, Notes on a Life, (Edin., 1911) p.119.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, II/I, undated. Blackie also expressed his encouragement in practical form, contributing a number of Greek verses of the kind which enjoyed a popular vogue at the time.

part in founding the Aberdeen University Magazine[1] in 1848. This enterprise grew out of friendship between some of the students at King's College and Marischal College. The upshot was that Donaldson and another student, Peter Bayne, formed a deputation to King's whereupon it was resolved to publish a magazine with Donaldson as one of the editors.[2] The magazine's success meant much to him: many years later he had the five issues which appeared during its short life bound in leather and carefully wrote the name of the author under each article. Today's reader is struck by the quality of the contributions for this was no student frolic but a collection of carefully researched - indeed erudite - essays and elaborate verse.

Of these, Donaldson contributed four - one on Anacrean, two on Modern Greek and another on the Baptist divine, John Foster. "I tried' he recalled "to explain the nature of his thought and the tenderness of his writings, intellectual and moral."[3] This article while by today's standards rather precious and overwritten[4], reveals an admirable vocabulary and command of English expression combined with a mastery of the subject and an exposition which supports his reference to the time and

1. Published between December 1848 and April 1849. This is not to be confused with a magazine of the same name which had appeared in 1836, instituted by ultra conservative Professors of King's College to propagate their opposition to the provisions of the Bill to reform the Scottish Universities introduced that year.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, II/I, undated.
3. Ibid.
4. The opening sentences admirably convey his style: "John Foster was a strong, rugged, and darkened soul. Nurtured amid rural scenes where he could indulge his passion for solitude, he was startled, while yet a young man, into wild wonderings by the volcanic outbreak of the French Revolution. Doubtless, like many others, he felt that now was dawning the era when tyrannical usurpation, however long sanctioned by might or time, were to give way to the dictates of truth; . . ."
Aberdeen University Magazine, March 1850, No 4, Vol I, James Donaldson, John Foster, p.118.

thought that he expended on it.[1] The pieces on Modern Greek were written to prove that the Greek language had continued to exist as a language from the earliest times down to his own day. Blackie's influence is discernible and Donaldson later acknowledged the extent to which his opinions had been developed from discussions with this classical scholar who had recently returned from Germany where he had associated with such famous scholars as Boeckh and Muller. Donaldson endeavoured to illustrate the continuous use of the language by various writers, both historical and ecclesiastical, down to the mid-nineteenth century "and the conclusion I reached was that the Greek of the New Testament was the ordinary and normal language of the great masses of the people in every land where Greek was spoken.[2] He must have had tremendous enthusiasm and interest in writing to have found time for these varied articles and his essays for the St Paul's St debating Society, especially when one considers the breathless schedule he set himself as a student:

"at six I am on my feet. Seven finds me at the labours of my class - in which I am engaged until nine - then I am three hours in College - from 12 to 1 I read an English author or a Latin poet - from 1 to 3 I teach. From 3 to 4 work either at mathematics or study (an) English poet or writer. From 4 - 8 teach. From 8 - 10 study Natural Philosophy or Euripides. Go to bed at 11. Think from 11 to half past 12, and then I fall asleep."3

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 14/12, letter to Margaret Kennedy, February 1848.
   "How delightful it would be to have Foster to talk with . . . I have sometimes most foolishly attempted to call up Foster before my eyes but vain are all my attempts." Ibid.
2. The Aberdeen University Review, Vl. I, 1913-1914, James Donaldson. As a consequence of these articles, he was invited to write on the Greek of the New Testament for Kitto's Encyclopoedia of Biblical Literature, Vol. III, 1863.
3. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 14/12, letter to Margaret Kennedy, January 1848.

Unlike countless student magazines born of boundless enthusiasm only to perish in the cold light of practical difficulties and financial reality, this one was a financial success. Its demise was due to most of those connected with it, including Donaldson, being unlikely to return to the University the following session. So it was agreed to wind up the magazine when each of the editors was delighted to receive more than a pound for his efforts.

The schedule Donaldson wrote of includes teaching: there is no evidence as to the kind of teaching although the hours suggest this may have been a school for children spending the time between in a factory. As a student Donaldson knew Sheriff Watson of Aberdeen, the founder of the Industrial schools, who sought to provide some education for waifs and strays and "gathered together a number of the roughest illiterate lads for the purpose of teaching them to read."[1] Donaldson may well have been drawn in on this charitable outreach but only if he had been paid something, for the motivation was the pressing need to augment the family budget rather than the pursuit of philanthropic ideals. Either the financial necessity associated with the work or the environment or a combination of both caused him to dislike teaching - "it makes me comparatively little wise and wearies my mind and body"[2] - but he accepted the situation with an admirably positive philosophy. "I have often wished," he wrote, "that I could find an employment better suited to my taste - but I know that however trying the circumstances may be to me they are helping to form my character - and I am determined

1. James Donaldson, University Addresses, (Edin., 1911), p.576. Address 12 October 1906.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 14/12, letter to Margaret Kennedy, undated.

that with God's help they shall form a noble one."[1]

Throughout his long life, Donaldson always exhibited an unflagging enthusiasm for any subject which interested him and while at the University he combined this energy with a developing intellectual and aesthetic awareness. "All the subjects of natural Philosophy are grand," he declared, " - and would be very interesting if we had a lecturer who could speak - I think they are more interesting than Natural History - during the winter - but oh it is the bonny flowers - and the sweet singing birds - and all nature blooming that I like to see."[2] There were ninety seven students in his year who in the fashion of the time attended together the same classes in the prescribed order for the four years of the degree course. "I had the privilege of sitting for four sessions on the benches of Marischal College, and very pleasant they were." he recalled thirty years later. "Our Professors were good. Our time was passed profitably. Better companions we could not have had, and we formed friendships which have been among the greatest blessings of my life."[4]

Several of his companions disappeared during these University years - some lost their lives to consumption or drowning while others were enticed to seek a new life in the colonies - but Donaldson was always popular with his fellow students who remained and who "were not only proud of him for his splendid capacity, but universally fond of him on account of his frankness, friendliness and geniality."[5]

1. Ibid: letter to Margaret Kennedy, undated. In another letter he commented that he would have to work over the summer - the long vacation then extended from the end of April until the beginning of November - and teaching seemed the only thing "tho' I am exceedingly tired of the trade". Ibid: letter to Margaret Kennedy, undated (Spring 1849)
2. Ibid: letter to Margaret Kennedy, January 1849.
3. Alma Mater, Aberdeen University Magazine, November 1906.
4. Daily Free Press, Aberdeen, 2 November 1882.
5. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 13/11, p.7.

In these years he was involved in student societies and activities - he addressed his first public audience to propose Dickens for Rector - and at the same time succeeded in distinguishing himself academically be being among the foremost three when the degrees were conferred in 1850. Yet is was his nature rather than his achievements which endeared him. Peter Bayne, who was to remain a close friend until his death in 1896, remembered that;

". . . strikingly brilliant as was his University career, it did not so strongly impress me as the lofty concept of the character and aim of a student. He rejected with scorn the idea of exerting his powers in order merely to obtain the College honours and not for the sake of knowledge."2

When it came to the actual graduation, Donaldson's Congregationalist tenets presented an obstacle; it was a requirement in all the Universities that a graduant, before having the degree conferred, should swear to abide by the orthodox doctrine of the Established Church. This was contrary to that freedom of conscience central to Congregationalist beliefs, for while accepting the basic beliefs of protestant christianity, they do not grant binding authority to a formal doctrinal summary as expressed in a creed, thereby preserving their independence of any higher authority. One cannot improve on Donaldson's own account of this episode, written many years later.

I was told before being capped I had to swear and vow that I would profess the one and only orthodox religion and faith publicly set forth in the Scotch Church, and widely differing from all heresies of papists or of any other persons whatsoever. It was not very clear whether the Latin word meaning "differing" (longe abhorrentum) agreed with the swearer of the faith. In the oath administered to the graduands of St Andrews there was no doubt. They had to take an oath that they would remain till their last breath in the profession of the purer religion which had been reformed from all the errors of the papists. I felt that I

1. Ibid: 13/12. Blackie wrote that "At the University of Aberdeen he carried everything before him." Ibid: 13/12.
2. Ibid: 13/11.

could not promise to reject all the heresies of every one whatsoever, or even of the Roman Catholics for all time to come, and I was not sure whether I had not already adopted some of the heresies denounded in the Westminster Confession of Faith, which was the standard of the Scotch Church. Professor Cruikshank took me to a private room in the College, and tried to show me that my scruples were unneccessary, that the oath was a mere form and that I was quite free to believe anything I liked. I could not see this, and then he told me that it did not matter whether I took the oath or not, that I would get my degree all the same." 1.

That August, Donaldson - "Believing that the office of Christian minister affords the best opportunity for the complete devotement (sic) of my faculties to the Cause of Christ"[2] - applied for admission to New College which the Congregational Church had opened that year in Hampstead. Both the Kennedy brothers had trained at the Theological Academy in Glasgow but during the late 1840s this had been rent by serious doctrinal conflict arising from the Morisonian controversy with attendant dislocation, unrest and changes in Professors.[3] John Kennedy was anxious that Donaldson should not be exposed to an environment convulsed by such dissension but in any case he had his own reasons for considering New College an eminently suitable alternative. Almost certainly he had been actively involved in establishing the College, by merging three of the Church's existing Colleges[4] to form the largest of the Congregational Church Colleges, and it was to remain a life long interest[5].

1. Interamna Borealis, Ed. W.K. Leask (Aber., 1917), p.27.
2. DWL: Ms 359/3i, James Donaldson, application for admission to New College, late August or early September 1850.
3. Largely as a consequence of these upheavals, the Academy was transferred in 1855 to Edinburgh where it became the Theological Hall of the Congregational church.
4. Those amalgamated were Homerton College (1696), Coward College (1738) and Highbury College (1778)
5. He was appointed Professor of Apologetic Theology there in 1872 "a position he reluctantly undertook . . . but from which the claims of his church compelled him to retire in 1876" and was subsequently Chairman of the College Council from 1884 until 1895. Congregational Year Book, 1901, p.193.

His prominent position in the Church in London ensured that he would always be intimately informed on all aspects of the College's administration and teaching and at Hampstead he could keep a paternal as much as a spiritual eye on his protégé.

Anticipating that distance might perhaps prejudice his application, Donaldson informed the College that in a fortnight he would be staying with the Reverend John Kennedy at 4 Stepney Green[1]. Soon afterwards he left Aberdeen by ship but before arriving in London, Kennedy had written to the College Council, determined that it should be fully aware of what was on offer.

"If I were to write as I feel, the Council wd very naturally regard my statements as coloured and exaggerated. But yet I venture to say that I doubt whether the University at which he has studied has ever sent out an alumnus of greater promise. It is his sincere desire, I am satisfied, to consecrate all his powers and acquisitions to the service of the Lord and Master whom he loves."2

Kennedy may have allowed himself a moment's satisfaction at having landed this catch for the church since it had not been achieved without effort on his part. Yet what he apparently failed to perceive - or perhaps chose not to - was that Donaldson's professed conviction that the Ministry was his true vocation owed much less to his own reasoning than the directing - even manipulation - of a teenager's emotional needs. Indeed, Donaldson's declaration for the church was neither as confident nor as straightforward as Kennedy professed to believe.

During the first years of his friendship with Kennedy, as an eleven and twelve year old, Donaldson had fought the good fight with both energy

1. DWL: Ms 359/1, letter from James Donaldson to the Council of New College, 5 August 1850.
2. DWL: Ms 359/5, letter from Reverend John Kennedy to the Council of New College, 17 August 1850.

and determination. "The sin against which I had especially to fight during this period was a love of fame combined with a love of learning. I was successful through fervent prayer and watchfulness. . . "[1] But as a recreation fighting sin has its limitations especially when fame and learning proved resilient adversaries. The intense religiosity wore off as Donaldson devoted progressively more and more time to study. The paradox of this development was that it was Kennedy himself who was largely responsible for the redirection of Donaldson's energy, since he had inspired him, in commmon with other young of ability in Aberdeen, with a love of literature and scholarship.[2] By the time Donaldson was in his third year at the Grammar School, this interest, which Kennedy had kindled was well alight: "The passion for learning had assumed a substantial basis in my mind. I had now more strength and greater reason to study hard. The consequence was that the pursuit of learning swallowed up my Christianity."[3] The church and its associated activities remained important to him but as a result of his horizons expanding, instead as dominating his life as it had formerly, these came to be accorded a more balanced place in the life of a teenager. This must have been evident to Kennedy before he left Aberdeen and after his departure for London, coinciding as it did with Donaldson's transition from schoolboy to student, the latter's enthusiasm for books and writing, as opposed to the church, was unrestrained.

1. DWL: Ms 359/3i, James Donaldson, application for admission to New College, late August or early Sept. 1850.
2. Interamna Borealis, Ed. W.K. Leask, (Aber., 1917), p.171.
3. DWL: Ms 359/3i, James Donaldson, application for admission to New College, late August or early September 1850.

Whether or not Donaldson was conscious of a dilemma concerning his choice of a career is indeterminable but he was forcibly confronted by it when Kennedy returned to Aberdeen for a visit in April 1848. "I knew" Donaldson recalled, "that many of my most esteemed friends expected me to study for the ministry. I was now fit to decide the point for myself - and I felt a strong desire to become entirely a literary man - though at the time I was conscious that theoretically it was my duty to become a minister or at least a Christian literary man."[1] To Kennedy, Donaldson was destined for the Congregational ministry; clearly, he had considered those Saturday afternoons spent together under his tutelage as the first steps in moulding a minister in his own image. For his part, Donaldson had doubtless expressed his intention of becoming a minister; that this may partly have been an expression of his worship of Kennedy cannot devalue his sincerity. Duty - that powerful determinant of Victorian behaviour - was what he now felt in regard to the church and Kennedy capitalised on this for he had no intention of allowing him to waver or, even worse, change his mind about his vocation. The power of Kennedy's brand of evangelism now reasserted itself on Donaldson - his text, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha"[2], was pregnant with portent - and he maximised its impact by tackling Donaldson immediately after the sermon, "and had that minister been able to divine my inmost thoughts" (just how well he had divined them Donaldson appears not to have realised) "he could not have pitched on the manner and matter of his talk more suitably than he did. It was plainly a case of special providence," he confidently decided, "Every word went to my heart. I felt deep

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.

agony . . . I went or rather ran home - fell on my knees in agony - and rose from that prayer with the complete assurance that God had heard me. 'Oh to grace how great a debtor'"[1] This at least is how he chose to present these events when he applied to New College, whether they really did strike him thus at the time is uncertain but it certainly does not reflect how he felt during the ensuing months after Kennedy had again departed from Aberdeen to exercise his charisma over his flock far away in Stepney. Before the year had ended Donaldson was confiding to Margaret Kennedy that:

> "I have felt (and the feeling has given me grief) that a church does not bring with it so many advantages as I had expected to realise. I have tried to remedy my feelings but all to no purpose - the opinion and feeling still cling to me that the churches - as a collection of members associated in spirit - is absolutely of very little use - I have felt it so - my devotional feelings have never expanded" and he added in expiation, "it is not right however for me to complain as the church may be adapted to most others - tho not to those of my cast of mind." 2

He had never evaluated the attraction of the church solely in spiritual terms. When still a child, before meeting Kennedy, it had been suggested to him that he should be a minister (which implies that he was bright at school rather than noticeably devotional for the ministry offered one of the few, and certainly the most usual, means of escape from a working class background) and he had been attracted to it even then from purely worldly motives for "my love of fame at once made me desire what appeared to my ambition as eminent position in society."[3] He perceived the church as the means of fulfilling both his intellectual and social ambition, writing to Margaret early in 1849 that if

1. Ibid.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers 14/12, Letter to Margaret Kennedy, 2 December 1848.
3. DWL: Ms 359/3i, James Donaldson's application for admission to New College, late August or early September 1850.

he became a minister - he was apparently far from certain in his own mind - "I shall feel it my duty as well as my privilege to comprehend the greatest intellects of my age."[1] His doubts seem to have been less concerned with his suitability for the church than of the church for him but while he was still a student he could satisfactorily avoid the issue. Yet he was not inhibited from assuring Margaret that "I shall, if I have power at all, preach the Gospel to poor sinners but the time seems for me more distant than I had imagined."[2] To Margaret, whose father and both her brothers had dedicated their lives to the church and whose whole world was steeped in religion this resolve of an ardent seventeen year old - and one, moreover, for whom she felt a tendresse - to return strayed sheep to the fold was, as Donaldson knew, just the sort of thing she would like to hear. To confess his doubts to someone of Margaret's disposition and whom he sought to please, they must have been in the forefront of his mind. Yet such was his commitment to the church that few, if indeed any, could have guessed he harboured doubts that the ministry was for him. During his last winter in Aberdeen on Sunday evenings he was in the habit of visiting homes in the most squalid and poverty stricken parts of the city where he would gather a few of the neighbours, read the Bible, pray with them and give an address.[3]

In addition to such home mission work he was still a teacher at the Blackfriars Street Sabbath School and he was also preaching; twice when in Inverness visiting the Kennedys he addressed the Congregationalists there and from time to time he would deliver the sermon at Blackfriars.

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers 14/12, letter to Margaret Kennedy, undated but can be placed in early 1849.
2. Ibid.
3. DWL: Ms 359/9, Letter from the Reverend Norman Wight to the Council of New College, London, 28 August 1850.

"His piety," Kennedy's successor there, the Reverend Norman Wight declared, "is at once enlightened and fervent"[1] an opinion endorsed by his congregation who at a meeting authorised Wight to express to the Council of New College "their confidence in Mr. Donaldson, their affectionate interest in him and their earnest wish that you may see fit to receive him as a student."[2]

Whether this evangelising indicated that he had, at least temporarily, reolved his doubts or was the means of consigning them to the furthest recesses of his mind is unimportant for there were other factors in his decision to train for the ministry and to do so in London rather than nearer home. His regard for the whole Kennedy family, whose hospitality, kindness and interest in him, he had known now for almost a decade, militated against disclosing his uncertainties and disappointing them. Equally, he may have been apprehensive that after having been held up in Blackfriars as "the model Boy" such an admission would cause the congregationalists there to lower their estimation of him. Furthermore, although he yearned for a literary career, how he might achieve this remained nebulous. Writing was a notoriously uncertain and precarious means of earning a livelihood and, unless he were to be exceptionally fortunate, would demand him having some income from other work. For someone with literary aspirations, a clergyman's life would be as convenient an occupation as any other. And if he went to London he would be relieved of real financial problems since the College Council would give him an allowance and Kennedy himself undertook to meet all his other expenses.[3]

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. DWL: Ms 359/5, Letter from the Reverend John Kennedy to the Council of New College, London 17 August 1850.

Donaldson may well have been glad of any opportunity of getting away from Aberdeen. On 1 January, just sixteen months before he left the University, his mother married a widower, Willian Hannan, in Blackfriars Chapel. Donaldson was a witness at his mother's second marriage and yet writing to Margaret that day he dismissed the event in a single line postscript across the top of a page; "My mother" he baldly informed this sympathetic and understanding friend, "has married Mr Hannan."[1] Such matter of fact disposal of this development suggests that it was no surprise to anyone but such brevity also may imply a lack of enthusiasm. It is understandable if he was less than enthusiastic, even resentful, of a step-father who would inevitably to some extent displace him in his mother's affection. Perhaps worse, his position as an only child was peremptorily ended for he now had two younger step-brothers under his feet, John and Henry Hannan born in 1838 and 1844 and a toddler stepsister, Christina, born in 1846. Nor could he have been readily reconciled to these new circumstances: he shared little common ground with his step-father, a dyer, and while the Scots as a nation may value learning, not every man of humble occupation is wholly appreciative of an intellectually gifted - even precocious - step-son and Donaldson had no experience of the constant concession and compromise which harmonious co-existence with younger siblings demanded. Moreover the family soon grew. During Donaldson's last year as a student, his mother was pregnant and 1 July 1850, less than two months before Donaldson left Aberdeen, bore her husband another daughter, Isabella. (The arrival

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers 14/12. Letter to Margaret Kennedy, 1 January 1849. Interestingly there is no indication that his mother's marriage entailed a domestic relocation. Since his step-father died in Blackfriars Street ten years later it is possible that the Hannah and Donaldson ménage was already established there at this time.

of a half-brother, William, soon followed.) Suddenly Donaldson's home life had completely changed and he cannot have considered it for the better. If he were anxious to excape from this domestic ménâge, training for the church offered a means for there was no Congregational College in Aberdeen. Without any more attractive or concrete alternative, were his reservations about the ministry to be allowed to thwart this chance of escape? In old age he observed that "In politics, it is necessary, it seems to me, to make compromises with oneself and to weigh all consideration for and against."[1] It was just such an empirical approach he brought to his present situation - necessity facilitated compromises with his conscience and enabled him to acquiesce gratefully with the Kennedy' plans for him.

Thus it was that Donaldson turned his back on his home town and found himself in Hampstead where he was remain until the summer of 1852. These two years are an enigma; his only surviving reference to this period is in his application for the Latin Chair at London in 1863 when, to account for these years, he wrote merely that "I then spent two years at New College, London."[2] In the years ahead, his attitude was as if these years had never been and indeed so complete was his silence that many, who believed they knew him well, had no idea that he had once been a theological student. Although he never made any claim to having achieved anything academically there, The Aberdeen Review in recording his death, mentioned that "On leaving the University, he studied at New College, London . . . but although completing his training he did

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/207, letter to Lord Rosebery, 14 December 1904.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Glasgow 13/23.

not become a clergyman."[1] New College admitted graduates directly into the theological course and he "studied theology with all the earnestness of an earnest soul."[2] Yet the fruit of this conscientious dedication was to be disenchantment with the church. Much later he expressed his conviction, which must have been founded in his experience during these years at New College, that there was,

"an absolutely indispensable requisite for a successful theological inquiry - freedom of thought. If theological study is fettered by restrictions and penalties, successful inquiry into theological subjects is an impossibility . . . he would be a bold man who could affirm that we have much freedom of thought in our churches. If you have watched the processes that go on among theological students, you will agree with me that they are somewhat of the following nature. The young and ardent student enters with keenness into his theological studies, but he soon finds that he is continually beating against the bars of his prison, and he quits the theological hall for ever."[3]

This can only imply that the staff of New College interpreted the freeedom on inquiry and conscience by which the Congregational Church set such store, in relative rather than absolute terms: Donaldson's enquiring mind acknowledged no limitations on freedom of thought and investigation. After he left New College, although his Christian faith remained central to his life he was never in the future to have a strong attachment to any individual denomination nor is there any evidence that he ever preached again.

1. The Aberdeen Review, 1915. The archives of New College are unable to throw any light on Donaldson's course there.
2. James Donaldson, Lectures on Education, (Edin., 1874), p.154. "I shall sketch one (a teacher) of the right kind, who may be known to some of my readers . . ." Both this introduction and the career described leaves no doubt that it was himself he was describing.
3. Contemporary Review, Vol. 41, January-June 1882 (Lond.), James Donaldson, On some Defects in the Educational Organization of Scotland, (January 1882), p.152.

He did, however, while in London, maintain his interest in writing: he contributed to two books published by a friend[1] and, no doubt with a view to earning a little money, succeeded in getting himself appointed representative of the North of Scotland Gazette to cover the Great Exhibition in the early summer of 1851. Dignified by the title of "Our Special Correspondent", during April and May he described at length the vast number of exhibits "for every nation on the fact of the earth is represented at the Crystal Palace."[2] Enthusiastically and with evident enjoyment he portrayed the official opening by the Queen, considered the foreign countries which were exhibiting and then surveyed Britain and her Dependencies. The Great Exhibition must have provided a remarkable and unique educational experience for a young man barely twenty. His descriptions have a naturalness and spontaneity which was to be lost in his later writing: "We have just returned from viewing the (Exhibition's) wonders - and we now sit down to write an account of them for the sake of our Aberdeen friends."[3]

The narrative of Donaldson's early life is that of a boy of humble background taking full advantage of the educational opportunities which were open to him. He had been enabled to do so because his family, although working class, was not desperately poor and, perhaps equally important, he had been the only child. Had it been necessary to stretch the family's limited resources to provided simultaneously for several children, his chances of it being possible for him to remain at school

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 13/11. Donaldson described these as "a chapter on the causes of volcanoes and the other on the theory propounded on the vestiges of creation." Both the book and the friend are unidentified.
2. North of Scotland Gazette, Aberdeen, 6 May 1851.
3. Ibid: 13 May 1851.

until he was fifteen, let alone go on immediately to the University for the full course, would have been greatly reduced if not totally extinguished. As his family's circumstances - and his own hard work - were responsible for him fulfilling his academic potential, so his environment had been largely responsible for finding himself in a theological college. His decision not to continue in the church appears neither to have been a great surprise nor disappointment to him and he soon found another, and propitious, opening which would readily accommodate his interests and talents. Leaving Scotland for London - a long way in 1850 - was however to have an important consequence totally unrelated to the purpose which ostensibly took him there - it caused him to make a complete break with the past by distancing him from his early background in Aberdeen. It is not infrequently observed in the lives of men and woman who early achieve a pronounced improvement in their social position that when on the point of spreading their wings they make a distinct severance with their previous world. For James Donaldson, the chance of becoming a student at distant New College offered the means of making that move.

# CHAPTER 2.

It was to be more than thirty years before Donaldson returned to Aberdeen to live by which time he had long established a social identity which belied his working class origin. When he had disclosed to his confidante, Margaret Kennedy, that the church did not offer as many advantages as he had anticipated he surely counted access to social mobility among his expectations. It is not unusual for a young man of ability to want to improve his social position but in achieving this Donaldson was confronted by a problem peculiar to the distinct character which Scottish society had developed by the mid-nineteenth century.

The unrelenting industrialisation and the consequent attraction of workers to the industrial towns were responsible for profound changes in the social structure of Scotland and these were particularly evident in the burgeoning cities. The industries which were transforming Scotland from a backward rural economy into an important industrial country were largely labour intensive, creating an enormous demand for workers. Although much of this was wholly or relatively unskilled a lot of skilled labour was also in demand but with a surplus of workers and without recognised unions and effective legislative protection the latter could be hired at cheap rates of pay; thus even a man with skills which were sought by employers could look forward to little improvement in his material comfort or social standing. As a result, growing cities like Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen developed a social structure;

> "with merchant princes and great manufacturers, and the professional men who worked with and for them at the top, but below them a great gulf until the vast mass of the urban population was encountered. These Scottish towns were, therefore, essentially two class towns; there was a wealthy upper middle class at the top and a relatively unskilled working class at the bottom." 1

1. J.H. Hanham, Scottish Nationalism, (Lond., 1969), p.21. This applied no less effectively to Edinburgh which had a long established pattern of an haute bourgeoisie of churchmen, advocates and lawyers, professors and bankers as well as some manufacturers elevated high above the working population.

The middle class was numerically very small and there was no rapidly growing lower middle class. A social structure affording little opportunity for social mobility was thereby created - in Scotland there was a social void; it was not only that the ladder of social progress had unevenly spaced rungs but rather that it was one where several adjacent rungs were missing altogether. The means by which an able and ambitious man of humble origin might span this gap were exceedingly limited and such men often, from necessity as much as choice, sought careers abroad, earning Scotland a renowned reputation an an exporter of engineers, doctors, administrators and the whole range of colonial officers and the like. Having turned his back on the church as a career, Donaldson now had to look elsewhere but there is no evidence that at any time he contemplated finding it abroad.

He must have perceived the social limitations of a career - if such it could be described - as a Congregatinal minister for the Congregationalists were a small flock and the possibilities of making a mark in the wider world correspondingly restricted.[1] Indeed, even if, like John Kennedy, he were to succeed in making a name for himself in that church and earn esteem and respect, he could expect little material reward. There is no way of assessing the extent to which the realisation, of how severely restricted were the scope and prospects of social advancement through the church, influenced his decision to turn away from the ministry. It may have been of no relevance whatsoever if his mind was made up by the absence of a real conviction that the church was his true vocation but his subsequent career strongly suggests that

1. The Congregationalists accounted for only about one in ten of the church places in Aberdeen in the 1840s.
A.A. McLaren, Religion and Social Class, the Disruption Years in Aberdeen, (Lond., 1974), p.37..

opportunities for social advancement were of more than peripheral interest. His intense involvement with the Congregational Church throughout his formative years, while it had quite naturally and almost inevitably drawn him towards the ministry, must by the same token have inhibited his consideration of other career opportunities. Now he was forced to explore the alternatives. What other careers at this period offered the means of moving upwards? Both medicine and law were well established avenues of achieving this for men of humble backgrounds but exceptional ability: Donaldson never expressed any interest in either and in any case he certainly did not have the means to embark on the lengthy course either demanded. Government service could also prove rewarding but, as Donaldson knew, only with an influential patron could he hope to find himself on the ladder to real advancement. There was also education; many of the burgh schools enjoyed long standing reputations and their rectors positions of consequence in the community. University chairs, too, conferred on their occupants a definite social recognition and one which outdistanced that conceded to most rectors. Remembering Donaldson's views on teaching, when as a student he had been driven to it from financial necessity, to settle on a career as an educationalist at first appears surprising. There were however, two very persuasive reasons for him turning to it now. Firstly, by simple elimination, for all intents and purposes it was the only one left; secondly, in education he had a patron. Until well towards the end of the nineteenth century no great significance attached to having a degree - there was consequently little incentive to graduate, in Donaldson's class of ninety five students only twenty five left with a degree[1] - and the reason

1. Records of Marischal College and University, (Aber., 1898), Vl. II, p.535. Since at this time the academic standard demanded for graduating was not high the importance of patronage was further enhanced.

was well understood: "A degree was not really essential for advancement; what mattered more was the favour of a . . . patron, who could smooth the path for a talented youth."[1]

The redoubtable Blackie who, impressed with Donaldson's academic promise, had taken him up at Marischal College, had in 1851 been appointed Professor of Greek at Edinburgh where for the following thirty years he "delighted and diverted his students with his exhibition of Hellenic versatility, not omitting some teaching of the Greek language."[2] Although he had been only a child at the time, Donaldson knew that Blackie's appointment to the Professorship at Aberdeen had been solely due to political patronage, for the sensation and outrage it had caused were still talked of in Aberdeen and indeed it is not unlikely that Blackie - he could never be described as reserved - had himself regaled Donaldson with his account of the event. Now Donaldson was old enough to follow with contemporary interest Blackie's tactics in gaining the Edinburgh chair. The Edinburgh University chairs lay within the patronage of the Town Council and Blackie, who had no hesitation in acknowledging that he was "unembarrassed in utterance"[3], utilised his inordinate capacity for self advertisement since "as there were thirty or forty of them (Town Councillors) not naturally familiar with the value of wares in the Greek market it was no easy matter to get them all formally instructed as to my merits. . ."[4]

1. A.L. Turner, History of Edinburgh University, (Edin., 1933), p.229.
2. A.L. Turner, History of Edinburgh University, (Edin., 1933), p.229.
3. J.S. Blackie, Notes of a Life, (Edin, 1910), p.130).
4. Ibid: p.158.

His efforts were not in vain for he was duly appointed by the Town Council which, moreover, proved sympathetic to his ideas on University reform. Blackie was anxious to help Donaldson in his dilemma about a career, the more so since he could sympathize from personal experience: he had himself been in the same predicament when after a boyhood imbued with fervent Calvinist religiosity he had almost completed the training for a minister of the Established Church before recognizing that this was not for him. By the greatest good fortune the Town Council had determined, in connection with Blackie's appointment, also to appoint a tutor who would be his assistant. The circumstances are interesting for the establishment of this tutorship was to assume an historical significance. The condition of the Scottish Universities will be considered more fully in the following chapter but suffice it to say here that at this time the Universities demanded no entry requirement whatsoever; this had concerned the Council for a number of years for in its government of the University it was demonstrating "an enlightened zeal for academical improvement"[1]. In 1847, it had sought the opinion of the Senate on "whether it is expedient that the system should be continued of admitting students to the Humanities (Latin), Greek and Mathematical classes without regard to their knowledge of the rudimentary principles of the Latin and Green languages, and of mathematics."[2] If not, then what examinations, the Councillors asked, should be introduced and would it not be expedient to examine students annually to ascertain their fitness for the higher classes? The Senate's answers are not recorded but it is unlikely that they were encouraging since the Arts Faculty had steadfastly opposed any suggestion of introducing such exams. The matter lay dormant until four an a half years later when the opportunity

1. Sir Alexander Grant, The History of the University of Edinburgh, (Lond., 1884), Vol. II, p.79.
2. Ibid.

the Town Council had been awaiting presented itself: in appointing Blackie to the Greek Chair it issued regulations to the effect that no student should be admitted to the Junior Greek class who had not sufficiently mastered the rudiments of the Grammar to be able to translate the first six books of St John.[1] To facilitate this innovation the Senate was to appoint a tutor, at a salary of £100 year, who during October and without a fee would prepared students intending to enter the junior Greek class when the winter session began the following month and thereafter would tutor the class. This was the first position of tutor or class assistant to be created in the Arts Faculty and over the ensuing years others were appointed to all the classes.[2]

Blackie knew that Donaldson was eminently qualified for the position and, moreover, to have as his assistant this young man whom he liked so much was a felicitous prospect: he promptly set about ensuring that the tutorship would be his. Again it was the Town Councillors who determined the appointment. "The tutorship looks good for Donaldson" he reported to his wife on 2 October 1852, "but these Town Councillors are capable of any interference. All that I can do, I shall come to hot words with them some day, if they do not give up interfering with what does not belong to them."[3] Such was Blackie's self assurance that he chose not to acknowledge that the decision lay with the Town Council or to recognise that it was he who might be regarded as interfering. His influence, however, prevailed and Donaldson arrived in Edinburgh to take up the position when the winter term commenced in November.

1. The following year the Council reissued its regulations, raising its standard to the extent of demanding twelve chapters of St. Luke instead of the six of St. John.
2. Sir Alexander Grant, The History of Edinburgh University, (Lond., 1884), Vl. II, p.79.
3. The Letters of John Stuart Blackie to his Wife, Ed. by A. Stoddard Walker, (Lond., 1909), p.129.

After the stress of wondering what he was going to do when he decided to turn away from the Church as a career, Donaldson was immensely grateful to Blackie and joyfully applied himself to being generally useful to this benefactor whom he knew and liked. The assistance which Donaldson so willingly gave, "both initiatory and supplementary, served to relieve the pressure of mere schoolmastering"[1] thus freeing Blackie to begin writing the great work on Homer which he had conceived. Both men were of one mind with regard to the methods of teaching and of pronunciation and together they studied modern Greek and the work or other scholars, corresponding in the language with Athenian friends and reading the newspapers sent to them from Athens. Work and pleasure merged. On leaving Aberdeen, Blackie had transplanted his Hellenic Society to the Athens of the North where at its meetings Donaldson met the many notable scholars who were welcomed as members. Serious study and conviviality went hand in hand. During the Society's early days in Aberdeen, the members' high thinking was accompanied by plain living but now the bread, cheese and ale of former days were replaced with stuffed turkey and champagne. Happily engrossed in these pursuits Donaldson was to remain at Blackie's side at the University for the following two years, publishing in 1853 Modern Greek for the Use of Classical Scholars and in 1854 Lyra Graeca, Specimens of the Greek Lyric Poets from Callinus to Soutos.

In the early summer of 1854, Donaldson and his friend from Marischal College days, Peter Bayne, who had embarked on a career as a writer, sailed from Leith to Hamburg from where they travelled on to Berlin. There they shared rooms and studied at the University - Mythology of Greece under Gerhard, Greek Life under Panofka and Greek verse under

1. Anna M. Stoddart, John Stuart Blackie, (Edin., 1895), p.140.

Boeckh. The choice of Berlin reveals Blackie's influence and it is probable that he had suggested this sojourn at a Prussian University since he himself had studied at both Berlin and Göttingen in the early 1840s. Donaldson was particularly drawn to studying the remains of ancient art for the light these cast on mythology and the classical writers.[1] He also began to read the great German writers with increasing enthusiasm and admiration and Peter Bayne remembered "the cheerful punctuality with which he used to rise in the morning and read Goethe for some hours before breakfast."[2]

This stay in Berlin made an indelible impression on Donaldson. Prussia was now emerging as the leader of the German states and the University at Berlin, like so many others throughout Germany, had already made impressive progress in promoting research and establishing chairs in new and expanding subjects, particularly in science. This willingness to recognize and encourage new subjects as worthy of University study, the much more efficient organisation which was evident and the appreciably higher academic standards demanded, provided a sharp contrast to Donaldson's University experience at home. From this time he was to retain the highest regard for the ideals of German education at all levels and for its organisation.

While in Berlin he was introduced to the ideas of the great German educationalists and was particularly impressed by those of Herbart. The importance which Donaldson thereafter attached to Herbart's[3] theories and the frequency with which he referred to them in his writing and

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 13/11.
2. Ibid.
3. J.F. Herbart (1776-1841).

speeches demands their consideration here. Of the educators before Herbart, some had made the training of character the end of education while others placed greater emphasis on instruction. Herbart was the first to connect character training with instruction through interest and developed techniques based on a psychological foundation to achieve both. To him the proper selection of the content of instruction and the right methods of presentation were for teachers a moral duty and factors in achieving his concept of education: this idea of forming character through instruction was Herbart's major contribution to eductional thought. His theory, with its concepts of orderliness (regierung), instruction (unterriht) and character training or self discipline (zucht),[1] and Pestalozzi's premise that lack of application was the consequence of lack of interest, were to be from this time clearly evident in Donaldson's attitude to education and his practice of it. "Moral education" Herbart asserted "is not separable from education as a whole "[2] and Donaldson wholly agreed, identifying with Herbart in the conviction that morality was the highest aim of mankind and that eduction in its widest interpretation should incline towards what is morally good. In the years ahead Donaldson would make recurrent references to these ideas in addition to papers dealing specifically with Herbart's theories.[3] Absorbed though he was in the discoveries his studies had opened to him, he still found time to enjoy the pleasures which Berlin and Potsdam and the surrounding country had to offer in the summer and his companion recalled how Donaldson was "habitually combining perfect regularity with perfect spontaniety

1. R.R. Rusk, The Doctrines of the Great Educationalists. (Lond., 1965), p.256.
2. Ibid.
3. For Example, On Herbart's Principles of Education, St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 8/6.

in work, he was never at a loss for time, never bookish, always ready for walking, bathing or boating excursion."[1]

In late July the chums returned home, for while in Germany Donaldson had been appointed Rector of the recently created High School at Stirling. He had been happy working with Blackie; the warm and easy relationship which had begun between Professor and student in their Aberdeen days had matured into that of Professor and acolyte tutor. But Donaldson was ambitious and since at this time no career structure existed for University teachers - all the lecturing was done by Professors who generally themselves paid for such assistants as they felt necessary - prospects within the University were severely limited. If he were to make his mark he realised that he would have to do so outside the University.

The schools of Stirling rival in antiquity the town itself, being mentioned as early as 1160.[2] From the middle of the sixteenth century the Grammar School occupied a site almost at the top of Castle Hill; the building which Donaldson was to know was the third on the site, having been built in 1788. He became Rector at a particularly interesting and important time in the history of the School. Under his predecessor, Dr George Munro who had been Rector since 1820, the School had continually deteriorated; the pupils became fewer, there were never ending disuptes with the staff and the Council and the School became such a scandal that several efforts, all unsuccessful, were made to remove the Rector.

1. Ibid: 13/11.
2. At an early date these schools came under the control of the Burgh so that considerably earlier than the Reformation the Stirling Town Council was speaking of "thair grammar schole"; this was unusual since in general burgh schools were under ecclesiastical control until taken over by the Town Council as a consequence of the Reformation. Old Boys and their Stories of the High School of Stirling, Ed. J. Lascelles Graham, (Stirling, 1900) p.27.

This intolerable situation only ended with Dr Munro's death in October 1851; the exasperated Town Council received the news of his demise with a corporate sigh of relief, and the way was open for long overdue change.

With Munro's death the history of the Grammar School as such ends, for not long before the Council had decided that the various burgh schools[1] should be brought together to form one School to be known as the High School of Stirling. After such a long and grievously unsatisfactory Rectorship, the Council decided that before appointing a successor that this was an appropriate time to consider the curriculum. The Council showed itself to be progressive in its ideas producing what was considered at the time to be a very advanced curriculum. Indeed, this Programme was so ambitious that it would not immediately be carried out in its entirety but it does demonstrate that the Council took seriously its responsibilities about education in the Burgh and was genuinely interested in providing a school which would offer the best possible education.[2]

1. As a result of inadequate accommodation in the Grammar School in the mid eighteenth century, a separate English School and a Writing School (which included arithmetic and book-keeping) had been formed by dividing the Grammar School.
   A.F. Hutchison, History of the High School of Stirling, (Stirling, 1904).

2. "The Programme of the Course of Study" the Council resolved on 19 December 1853, "will stand thus:-

   I. English - (1) Reading, Spelling, Derivation; (2) Grammar Composition; (3) Geography and History; (4) Natural History.
   II. Commercial - (1) Writing and Arithmetic; (2) Book-keeping.
   III. Classical, Etc. - (1) Latin and Greek; (2) Higher Branches Mathematics and Natural Philosophy and Astronomy.
   IV. Modern Languages - French, German, Italian."

   The fees were also fixed: Classics, 7/6 per qtr; French, German Italian - any one language, 5/-; any two, 7/6; all three, 10/- per qtr. Fees for Music, Drawing and Gymnastics were not fixed as there was as yet no accommodation for any of these classes.
   A.F. Hutchison, History of the High School, Stirling, 1904) p.187.

If the Council was to give this attention to the curriculum they were determined to give no less to finding a good Rector. Before Munro's advent in 1820, Rectors of the Grammar School had been among the foremost scholars of their day and the School had enjoyed a deserved reputation: but as a consequence of Munro's years of quarrels, haphazard administration and general neglect in teaching, it had lost ground. Now the Council wanted a Rector who, in addition to possessing suitably impressive academic qualifications, would revitalise the school, reclaim its former academic standing and have the administrative capacity to co-ordinate the integration of the schools into the new High School. The Council were looking for someone who shared its ideals and aspirations for the new school and who would make these a reality. In Donaldson they found the man they were looking for. He was young - just twenty three - and could be expected to be Rector for many years, he was enthusiastic, he had a degree and at the time of his appointment, 11 July 1854, he was even then studying in Germany.

The young Rector's first public appearance was at the laying of the foundation stone of the new school. After three centuries the site high up on Castle Hill was to be abandoned and the school built further down the hill on the site of the Fleshmarket and Slaughterhouse and part of what was then Cowane's Lane, formerly known as Greyfriars Yard, being the ground once occupied by the old monastery of Franciscans or Greyfriars. The ceremony on 3 August was the occasion for great excitement and celebration; a procession of the town dignitaries - the Council. The Guildry, the Seven Incorporated Trades - the boys of all the schools and everyone who had any claim to join in wound their way with flags and bands from Allen Park up Castle Hill to the new site. Donaldson

had been reluctant to take part in the procession - he may have felt self conscious on account of his age - but his position as Rector demanded it. Later in the Red Lion Hotel, where Burns had etched his verse on a window pane with a diamond ring, Donaldson recounted how as he walked up the Bow,

> "I thought I saw the spirit of our heroes coming and joining the procession, as if they were not afraid of their descendants . . and then I thought of Robert Bruce, who if he had lived in these modern times, would have been the very man who would have come here and dined today. I picture to myself that old man with his high cheek bones saying "This is your work, set to it with all your spirit, and all your might. This is God's work. I would have educated my children to fight against the Russians, and resist all enemies but there is a grander work than fighting against the Emperor of Russia, and that is fighting against the Emperor of Evil." 1.

This address perfectly matched the spirit of the event, invoking the memory of Robert I under whom Scottish nationalism had been asserted and which had caused the Papacy more than five before to authorise the annointing of her Kings, thereby recognizing Scotland as a sovereign state and bringing these historical allusions up to contemporary events with topical reference to the Tsar with whom Britain had been at war in the Crimea since the previous year. And if the Councillors prided themselves of their enlightened and progressive approach to education in their burgh, Donaldson was glad to demonstrate that his ideas were equally as advanced as theirs, urging in his lengthy address that instruction in photography be introduced in the school.[2] He could make such an highly original and innovative recommendation with an increased confidence for to have found himself a Rector at such an early age was indeed a feather in his cap. The school had entered a period of unprecedented

1. Journal and Advertiser, Stirling, 4 August 1854. This is the earliest of Donaldson's speeches of which a record survives.
2. Ibid.

change, impressive new buildings were going up and the Council was determined to give him whatever support he needed. Not least the position enabled him to support a wife.

At the end of the year he travelled to Inverness and it was there on 4 January that he and Margaret Kennedy were married by her father in the Congregational Church. Their friendship, of necessity largely epistolary, had continued through the years that Donaldson was living in London and later in Edinburgh but it is impossible now to discover when an "understanding" about marriage became part of their relationship. The marriage certificate gives Donaldson's age as twenty four and that of his bride as thirty two. Neither was correct: Donaldson was only twenty three - he would not be twenty four until the following April - but Margaret was actually at least thirty six, thirteen years older than her husband.[1] The picture presented by this couple - the twenty three year old husband and his intelligent but staid and middle aged bride - is hardly the rapture of love's young dream but if it were short on romance, it was founded on something generally more enduring, practical common sense.

Now that he was Rector it was a real advantage, both domestically and socially, to be married, but where the Donaldsons made their first home when they returned to Stirling is uncertain. There was a schoolhouse in the old building on Castle Hill - Donaldson's predecessor had died there - but until the new buildings were ready both the English School and the Writing and Mathematical School as well as the modern

1. According to the marriage certificate, she would have had her thirty third birthday during 1855 which would place her birth in 1822 but at her death in April 1887 Donaldson recorded her age as 69. If her birthday fell after April she would have been seventy that year, indicating that she was born in either 1817 or 1818, closer to her brothers who were born in 1814 and 1815.

Languages Master - he had been appointed at the same time as Donaldson - were crushed into the old building while the Rector and his Classics Department were forced to find a temporary home in the East Kirk Session House. In these circumstances it is probable that the Donaldsons rented a small house in the vicinity of the School.

Stirling suited Margaret well. Capable and well read, but shy and reserved, her writing - writers and books had been one of the Donaldsons earliest mutual interests - had earned her real, if modest, success. Since 1850 she had been a regular contributor to such magazines as the Leisure Hour and the Sunday at Home; for the former she had penned several biographies, such as those of Lady Blessington and Benjamin Franklin, while for the Sunday at Home she composed sermons, especially those suitable for children, which reflected her deeply religious nature. Now in Stirling, between looking after their modest home and caring for her much younger husband, she continued her literary pursuits and if Donaldson is to be believed she was in the happy position, the envy of every author, of never having an article refused.[1] She continued writing until she became a mother and although, many years later, she seriously considered resuming writing, nothing came of it.[2] Her husband was no less industrious on the literary front producing a number of articles for Hogg's Magazine and the Eclectic Review. Predictably, these were mostly on classical subjects - Greek Pronounciation, Herodotus

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/104, letter to Lord Rosebery, 3 May 1887.
2. A quarter of a century later she sought advice from Peter Bayne, by then a successful journalist in London, who replied that "the difficulty of making a new start may, even with our established reputation as a magazine writer, be as great as that of, if not even greater than that of, your original start". St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers Ms 5899, letter from Peter Bayne, 15 September 1881.

and for the Eclectic Review an article on Greece and Modern Greek Literature which was subsequently translated into Modern Greek and earned the author the thanks of the Greek Government of the day.[1]

Yet despite a contented home with the company of a sympathetic wife, for reasons which remain obscure Donaldson was not happy in Stirling, and when in October 1855 William Geddes, who had succeeded Melvin as Rector of Aberdeen Grammar two years earlier, was appointed Professor of Greek at King's College, Aberdeen, Donaldson applied for the position. According to the terms of Patrick Dun's Deed of Mortification, the Rector was selected by two ministers of the Burgh together with the Principal and four regents all Professors, of Marischal College. So seriously did these "Examiners" undertake their task that they invited to assist them two other ministers and a further three Professors of Marischal College, Dr Francis Adams of Banchory and the former Rector, now Professor Geddes of King's.

On 5 December, Donaldson and six other candidates, presented themselves in Aberdeen. Unlike Stirling High School, Aberdeen Grammar School made no pretensions to being educationally progressive, resolutely cleaving to the traditional classical curriculum. The education which the School offered was not discernibly different from that which Donaldson had received a decade earlier for the Examiners were solely concerned with the candidates' knowledge of the Classics, making their selection,

1. Ibid: Box 15/55.

"by proposing to them passages from the Greek and Latin Classics both in prose and verse requiring them to translate the same, to construe and analyse portions of them, to answer such critical and other questions as certain of the passages suggested, to state such questions as they would think necessary to put regarding them to scholars in the highest class of a Grammar School along with the answers thereto which they would expect to receive, and to mention such remarks as they would think it necessary to make for illuminating the passages submitted to them for that purpose, by requiring to scan Latin poetry, to give an account of the Horatian Metres, and to answer questions connected with Prosody, by proposing passages in English to be translated into Latin, Greek, and further by proposing to them, to be answered in writing an extensive series of questions on the Antiquities, Literature and History of Greece and Rome, on Modern History and on Ancient and Modern History." 1

The candidates were subjected to this grilling for three successive days. When the Town Council met on 18 December, the Examiners recommended that Thomas Waller Eyre Evans, Head Classical Master at the Royal Academical Institution of Belfast be appointed. They were not however unanimous in their choice for the Reverend Robert Brown, a regent and Professor of Greek at Marischal College, submitted a written dissent. While readily acknowledging the high order of Evan's talents, Brown could not agree that he "is of all the competing candidates the best. . . it is my opinion that Mr Donaldson, taking a conjunct view of the whole examination had the advantage."[2] Brown's was a lone voice in championing Donaldson and when the Council reconvened on Christmas Eve, it predictably appointed Evans. Perhaps the Council really elected the best man to be Rector of their Grammar School but it was widely believed in Aberdeen that the city's own son had been passed over because he was credited with unorthodox religious convictions.[3]

1. Aberdeen Town Council, Minutes of meeting 18 December 1855.
2. Ibid.
3. Mr A.L. McCombie, Deputy Rector, Aberdeen Grammar School to the author.

Meanwhile, back in Stirling, the building of the new High School, begun with such optimism and which Donaldson had followed so eagerly as he planned for all that could be achieved within the completed building, had soon run into difficulties. The ambitious plan was for a building ranged round three sides of a quadrangle which was to form a spacious playground, the collegiate looking buildings to be in the English Gothic style which Augustus Pugin had succeeded in convincing earnest mid-Victorians was both "native" and, most importantly, "Christian". The design was not only impressive but well in advance of the architecture and planning evident in schools of the time. Unfortunately it was also greatly beyond the resources of the Burgh and in November 1855 it was announced that the money was exhausted, and that building had ceased. The Council, however, guaranteed the workmen's wages and in due course building was resumed. On 12 May the following year, by which time four classrooms had been completed, the new High School was partially opened and the old Grammar Schoool building sold.[1] Perhaps as a result of the financial difficulties confronting the Council over the building, the opening, if such it can be called, was a subdued affair compared with the celebrations attendant on the laying of the foundation stone less than two years earlier. Donaldson tactfully played down the importance of the new building, since only the west side of the quadrangle had been built and now it was anyone's guess when the building, as planned, would be completed.[2] "The true state of the case" he assumed the gather-

1. The building became a militia store and today remains almost unaltered as a restaurant adjoining, at the rear, the Castle Esplanade.

2. The High School stayed in this uncompleted state all the time it remained in the hands of the Council and for many more years after passed into the control of the School Board in 1872.

ing, "is that where there are good teachers and good patrons, we will have good education."[1] While this must have been balm to the ears of the financially embarrassed Councillors, it was nonetheless a sincere declaration of Donaldson's belief that while it was an advantage to have good accommodation, the most important factors for success in education were the quality of the teachers and the interest which the patrons took in the school and this was to be a recurrent theme throughout his life.

The Council's high hopes for an imposing new building had been disappointed but Donaldson left them with no doubt that their confidence in the selection of their new Rector had not been misplaced. "I think the teaching of youth is one of the noblest occupations." he told them, "and for my own part, with the experience I have had, I would rather teach boys, and a fine class of boys we have got, I may tell you, than I would teach elderly persons, who are so much more still and difficult to move."[2] The elderly listening apparently did not exhibit this rigidity of temperament for everyone cheered and the gloom which might have clouded the move to the school was lifted.

The Councillors, however, were soon to have another disappointment. They had appointed their young Rector with every expectation that he would remain at the helm of their new creation for many years and that by working together the High School would regain the prestige which the Grammar School had enjoyed in former days and there had soon been encouraging signs that Donaldson would indeed restore academic distinction

1. Journal and Advertiser, Stirling, 16 May 1856.
2. Ibid.

of the burgh's school. The Grammar School had been almost defunct when Dr Monro died: Donaldson had opened his classics classes with only about forty pupils and had succeeded in doubling this number in two years. In the event, Donaldson stayed in Stirling only two years for when later that summer he was offered a position as one of the classical masters at the High School in Edinburgh, he gladly accepted. He was highly regarded by pupils, parents and the Council which had proved itself eager to listen to his ideas and to do all in its power to give the Burgh a school it could be proud of - its enthusiasm had exceeded its financial resources - and the School itself, even if incomplete, was brand new. The Council, constituting as it did the managing body, fixed the fees and appointed the masters (and had the sole right to dismiss them) but it did not concern itself with admission and expulsion nor did it interfere in the studies or the discipline of the School all of which were reserved to the Rector. The Council must have been incredulous that anyone, the envy of so many in being appointed Rector at such a young age and in such auspicious circumstances, would resign to become just one among several masters elsewhere; it could not appear other than a retrogressive move. The truth was that their Rector had found himself uncomfortably out of his depth. Such elementary teaching as he had been driven to from financial necessity in Aberdeen and that under Blackie's aegis at Edinburgh had proved totally inadequate experience not only for teaching in a secondary school but also for assuming the management of a school in the flux of integration and development. (In applying for the Rectorship at Aberdeen he may have persuaded himself that he would cope better in a familiar school and where he might

anticipate fewer administrative problems.) Years later he would admit that his two years at Stirling "although outwardly successful were in reality anything but a success."[1] This realisation of how deficient he was in his knowledge of teaching methods was responsible for his lifelong interest in the training of teachers and in what he termed the science of education.

Such at least was Donaldson's explanation but whe all was said and done he would be no better equipped as a teacher merely changing his geographical location. He would, however, be relieved of the cares and responsibilities of chief administrator and in this probably lay other reasons for him leaving, about which he chose to remain silent. Until the Scottish Education Act in 1872 one of the chief defects of the secondary school was the lack of organisation, a situation largely attributable to the method by which teachers were paid. The system whereby the income of a teacher depended on the number of pupils attending his classes and the fees they paid, successfully militated against achieving either unity of aim or effective central administration in the school. For even after the progressive changes the Council had initiated, Donaldson was not a Rector in the modern sense since the masters of the various departments continued to function virtually independently for several years.[2] Within the High School the problems emanating from this arrangement were further aggravated by the difficulties inherent in trying to integrate three schools which had formerly enjoyed total independence from each other into a single, large and functionally harmonious establishment: it would have been indeed remarkable if there had not been

1. Colebrookdale Commission, 1st Report, 1872, p.199.
2. A. Bain, Education in Stirlingshire, (Lond., 1965), p.176. It was not until the term of office of A.F. Huchison between 1866 and 1896 that the Rectorship evolved into its modern meaning.

tensions between individuals and if some of the staff had not resented a man so much younger being appointed Rector, their feelings manifested by anything from passive non co-operation to active obstruction and defiance. Having to contend with a fractious staff was probably a contributing factor in his desire to get away from the place but it is improbable that this was the whole story for there are no grounds to believe that the situation would have been markedly different had he been appointed Rector at Aberdeen. Whatever the reasons it is greatly to his credit that he resigned the Rectorship for a less prestigious position. Such other factors as may have contributed to or butressed his decision - we can only speculate - do not detract from his integrity in resigning.

Thus it was that on a Tuesday morning in late September pupils and parents crowded into his classroom where one of the senior boys, an Ebenezer Gentleman, read an Address before handing a gold chain around the departing Rector's neck. "Mr Donaldson acknowledged the gift in a very feeling manner, and bade his pupils an affectionate farewell " The Stirling Advertiser and Journal informed its readers, imbuing the scene with that sentimentality calculated to bring a lump to the throat with its word picture of the Rector's Farewell when "Many of the children were moved to tears."[1] His resignation was the cause of real regret in Stirling and at a farewell dinner at the Golden Lion, Provost Sawyers spoke of the "golden opinions" Donaldson had earned, not only on account of his efficiency as a teacher (apparently others did not rate him as poor a teacher as he did himself), but also for his amiability which had endeared him to all classes of the community.[2] So ended this short, not wholly happy but learning experience in Stirling and without more ado he and Margaret departed for Edinburgh.

1. Journal and Advertiser, Stirling, 3 October 1856.
2. Ibid.

The Donaldsons made their first home in the capital at 54 George Square. This was a temporary arrangement for Margaret was expecting her first child and in the afternoon of 20th March 1857 a son, James Kennedy Donaldson, was born in the house on George Square. Later that year the family moved to 33 Gayfield Square off Leith Walk and it was here on 8 April 1859 that another son, John Kennedy Donaldson was born. The parents' happiness, however, was to be short lived for in early July the baby began to show the dreaded symptoms of gastro-enteritis, his condition grew steadily worse until a week later, on 10 July, he died. Donaldson bought a plot in Warriston Cemetary and there the infant was interred. Two years later they left the house which had witnesserd this tragedy and went to live in the New Town, at 30 Howe Street, which was to remain their home for the next four years until in 1866 they moved yet again, this time to 8 Mayfield Street.

Donaldson had been anxious to extricate himself from his situation in Stirling but there were positive reasons why, on leaving there, his destination was the High School in Edinburgh. The Rector was aprominent German scholar, Leonhard Schmitz; he was already known to Donaldson who thought him "an exceedingly nice man"[1] and claimed that a few years later he became a "great favourite with the Prince of Wales and Prince Albert."[2] While one can only be sceptical that the Prince of Wales ever evinced enthusiasm for anyone set on furthering his education, the Prince Consort was certainly attracted by Schmitz' reputation and in effecting his well intentioned but inhumane plan of the perfect education to befit a perfect King, he had Schmitz instruct the eighteen year

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/59, letter to Lord Rosebery, 7 June 1885.
2. Ibid.

old Prince when the Royal Family was residing at Holyrood in the summer of 1860. Almost certainly there was a definite nexus between Donaldson's admiration for German educational theories and his appoinment as a Master at the High School, that Schmitz recognised not only a young man with a genuine interest in teaching but, moreover, one who shared fully his educational philosophy and who would support him in putting this into practice. The High School already enjoyed a justified reputation as the forerunner in introducing new subjects and wider ideas of education, indeed in the evolution of its curriculum the School has been described as "perhaps the most instructive example of the progress of ideas on secondary education in Scotland in the nineteenth century . . . The School showed itself ever ready to incorporate in its curriculum such new branches of knowledge as were pointed out by the spirit of the age as necessary and useful."[1]. By 1814, its advances in teaching Greek had been so impressive that the Town Council decided to award a gold medal annually to the best Greek scholar in the School, in 1827 General Knowledge was introduced as a subject and in 1845, German. By that same year there was a systematic, and more or less compulsory, course in Classics and English, taught by four Classical Masters, each of whom taught a class through four years before passing the boys on to the Rector: "English" was a collective term, incompassing besides Reading, Writing and English Composition such subjects as Greek, History and General Geography - all these at the time when Donaldson and his contemporaries at the Grammar School in Aberdeen were being "educated" on a diet of unrelieved Latin.

1. J. Strong, A History of Education in Scotland, (Oxf. 1909), p.185.

The Royal High School - it had been Schola Regia since the reign of James VI - was the Grammar Schoool of Edinburgh and had for long been regarded as the foremost burgh school in Scotland.[1] On the Reformation the High School, in common with most burgh schools founded before 1560, passed into the control of the Town Council which from that time owned and maintained the buildings, determined the curriculum and the regulations concerning discipline, appointed the Rector and masters, paid the salaries and fixed the fees. The salaries were in reality little more than token payments, since as elsewhere, the Masters collected and retained fees from their classes; for this reason class registers effectively doubled as account books and consequently no thought was given to their preservation in the School.

Soon after the Reformation the Town Council accommodated the School in a new building in Blackfriars Kirkyard where it remained until its move to the New Town, with the exception of the years from 1660 to 1668, for after his victory at Dunbar Cromwell took possession of Edinburgh, ejected the scholars and appropriated the School buildings for barracks. In 1825 the Council was forced to decide about a new home for the School since the immediate post-Reformation building with its addition built two hundred years later were now both decrepit and inadequate. On its new site on the Calton Hill the School was provided with a striking neoclassical home, in the fashionable Greek Revival, complete with portico and pavilions.

1. For a school with a foundation of such antiquity and prominence it is surprising that there are few records of the School before the middle of the nineteenth century. Continuous historical record only dates from the first published Rector's Report in 1846.

The High School's acknowledged pre-eminence in secondary education, its long standing reputation for being in the van of educational development and innovation, his high regard for the Rector and their shared ideals - even the buildings, themselves such an impressive adornment to the Athens of the North - all these attracted Donaldson to this school which from the start he found very much to his liking. "The peculiarity of the High School" he explained," has always been that its masters have been men of eminence in their own department - men who might become headmasters of public schools, but who would never dream of taking subordinate positions in such schools . . .[1] He was delighted to be numbered among this exclusive meritocracy - it did his ego no harm either - the other masters proved to agreeable associates and he found teaching the boys enjoyable and satisfying because of the "tone" that prevailed among them. The latter was due to the distinctly up-market nature of the school, reflecting the social background of the majority of his pupils and the attitude of the parents as Donaldson fully realised:

> "I attribute this tone mainly to the circumstance that the parents who send their children to the High School are in earnest about their thorough education, and that a large proportion of those parents are professional men, ministers, physicians, teachers and others who impress on their sons that the best they can do for them is to give them a sound education."2

Such parental support is enormously encouraging and helpful to a teacher at any time but this talk of "tone" and professional men - many parents of humble occupation, Donaldson's among them, were equally conscious of the value of education - reveals the underlying awareness of class distinctions which became highly developed in Victorian society, not least in Edinburgh. The class connotations of the High School had a definite appeal to the new Classics Master.

1. R.H.S., Rector's Report, 1872-73, p.5.
2. Ibid: 1866-67, p.5.

Although providing an essentially classical education - "The schools" Donaldson observed much later, "had their curriculum determined by the usage of all educational nations, by the wants of the times, and especially by the curriculum of the Universities."[1] - the High School was conspicuously progressive. As early as the beginning of the century geography and history had been introduced and, more recently, provision had been made for teaching foreign languages (French and German) and basic science. Ten years earlier when Donaldson was being pumped with an exclusively classical education at Aberdeen Grammar School, the High School in Edinburgh was already teaching a much wider curriculum.

From his earliest years in Edinburgh, Donaldson was highly regarded by both the boys and his fellow masters. Schmitz, writing a few years later, in 1863, declared that "By this great achievements, by his scholarly habits and pursuits, and by his great success as a teacher, he has ever since his appointment, been one of the chief ornaments of the School "[2] while another Classics Master described Donaldson as possessing "In a very large measure the art of communicating, he is remarkably successful in imparting to the young a portion of his own enthusiams."[3] More than ordinary success as a teacher may be ascribed to the combination of intellect and the ability to communicate: in Donaldson these attributes were conjoined with another, a sweetness of temperament. His friend, the shy Andrew Davidson, was convinced that one "more aimable in nature, could hardly be. The last trait makes him the loved friend of all who know him, and added to his other qualities as a teacher, the idol of his students. . . "[4], while a pupil of these early years recalled "the success with which he enlisted the attention of the more

1. St. Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Box 13/II.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

backward pupils, thereby maintaining perfect discipline and order in classes which were generally very large"[1] What is remarkable about the memories of Donaldson in the classroom is their consistency and it is this which gives those, which in isolation one might be tempted to consider an exaggeration, their credibility.

He would never tolerate any nonsense from the boys and indeed his classes were noted for the perfect order which prevailed. Although it was not unknown for him to deliver "some of the best strap oil a boy ever deserved"[2] as one recipient conceded, he rarely had occasion to have recourse to this form of discipline. For all minor infractions he would invariably admonish the offender with "This must never happen again"[3] or "Now there must be none of that"[4] which were the strongest reproofs he was ever known to utter and by all accounts nothing more was needed, for his good humour, kindliness and total fairness together with the respect in which he was held give him complete and natural control over the restive spirits of the young. Although on occasions he could affect a stern aspect, he was immensely respected and admired, not least because as a teacher he did not favour the academically more gifted above the others. He would encourage his pupils by speaking of the successes of their predecessors and particularly he would recount the achievements of those who had demonstrated no special aptitude at school. He would tell a class, frankly and in a most natural manner, that they were a good, but average, group of boys, that there was nothing exceptional about them and that he had taught much cleverer classes.

1. Ibid.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 8918.
3. Aberdeen University Review, 1915, Vol. I, p.195.
4. The Scotsman, 15 March 1915.

But he would assure them, they should not be discouraged on that account for from classes very like theirs had come several men who had gone on to win great distinction.[1] The boys who shone less remembered him with a fondness equal to that of those for whom school had been less of a struggle. "I was a pupil of yours during your first year at the High School" one wrote almost half a century later "and although by no means a credit to you I know that the knowledge that you imparted there did me good service. . . any measure of success I have attained is greatly due to your patience with me."[2] Christianity by percept and example was foremost: he noted in his diary which masters were late - or failed to appear at all - for prayers; boys guilty of the same transgression would be set to write an essay on Procrastination is the Thief of Time[3] and one boy recalled how in these daily intercessions Donaldson remembered "this good report and this bad report."[4] indeed what many of his pupils found most memorable about him was his "influence for good"[5] and his "wise counsel and kindly encouragement."[6]

For the remainder of their lives many of his former pupils always thought of him with great affection, remembering his kindness and the interest he had taken in them. For he would take lonely and homesick boys from the country to his own home to be made welcome by the homely Margaret. There Donaldson would interest them in his books with their illustrations of Ancient Greece and Rome and shared one of his great pleasures, reading Horace after dinner.[7] Few forgot the brilliant and

1. Aberdeen University Review, 1915, Vol. I, p.197.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 8929.
3. Aberdeen University Review, 1915, Vl. I, p. 195.
4. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, MS 8585.
5. Ibid; Ms 8911.
6. Ibid. Ms 8922.
7. Ibid: Ms 8505.

poetic feeling which his teaching of the Odes of Horace inspired or his apt comprisons between these and the Psalms of David.[1] His enthusiams was so infectious that he started an Homeric Club which met in his own study at the High School.

All the descriptions of Donaldson, first as a Classics Master and later as rector, portray him as patient, modest, diligent, firm yet kindly, cheerful, sensible and just,[2] a combination rarely encountered in one man. It was a recognition of his impact as a teacher, both within the High School and beyond, that in 1868 he was presented with the gold watch that had belonged to Dr Adam,[3] whom Schmitz had succeeded as Rector in 1846. An indication of how the boys felt about him was the forming in 1865 of the Donaldson Club. The members, pupils whom Donaldson had taught, met for an annual dinner in Dejay's Hotel on Princes Street to reminisce but also to maintain contact with a man they not only admired but regarded with real affection.

Donaldson's generosity and kindness were not limited to those boys and masters who were connected with the High School. He would lend money to friends who were temporarily embarrassed and continued to do so all his life, often not looking for repayment[4]. It was at this time too that he began a friendship which was to continue until death: she was called Minnie Mackay - later she would be known to the world as the novelist Marie Corelli - delighting in her company, as she did in his, taking the little girl by the hand to see the sights of Edinburgh.[5]

1. The Scotsman, 15 March 1915.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 7324.
3. The watch was presented to Donaldson by Dr. Adam's son-in-law.
4. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 5892.
5. Ibid: Glasgow Papers, Box 14/19, letter from Marie Corelli to Principal Herkless, March 1915.

It was also during these early years at the High School that he was introduced to phonetic spelling and work in this field which was to become a lifelong interest. The father of two of his pupils was none other than Alexander Melville Bell who had been studying the organs of speech for over thirty years and had invented a set of symbols - a "rational alphabet" which he called "visible speech" - based on the organs by which sounds were produced. One evening in 1859 Melville Bell and his sons were invited to the Donaldson home in Gayfield Squre to demonstrate his system. Donaldson at Bell's request "barked like a dog, as well as I could, I squealed and made every sound I could think of" which Bell duly recorded in his symbols, whereupon he called in one of his sons from another room. This was Alexander Graham Bell - later to become famous as the inventor of the telephone - who, taking up his father's notation, proceeded to emit all the sounds Donaldson had made "with absolute accuracy".[1]

It had not taken the Donaldsons long to find themselves an agreeable social circle and one which was not wholly dependent on the many opportunities for making new friends which the capital readily provided. When he returned to Edinburgh Peter Bayne and another friend from Marischal College, Andrew Davidson, were both living there. Born at Ellon in 1830, Davidson had been a pupil in Melvin's fourth class at the Grammar School in 1844-45; being a year above Donaldson and exceptionally shy they had no more than known him by sight and Davidson had then entered Marischal College a year before Donaldson and Bayne. Professor Blackie had often mentioned Davidson to his coterie as a very clever student -

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Box 11/17.

he could never be persuaded to join any of Blackie's At Homes or Societies being, it seems frightened off by the gregarious host. However, some time during his last year at Marischal College, 1848-49, the retiring Davidson became friendly with Bayne and was persuaded to attend meetings of a society for literary and philosophical discussion which Donaldson and Bayne had been instrumental in forming. Bayne had described him to Donaldson as remarkably clever and Donaldson had been "quite struck with the wide range of his reading in poetry and philosophy".[2]

Now, reunited with them in Edinburgh, Donaldson had discovered Bayne and Davidson to be bosom pals. Both strongly evangelical and ardently attached to the principles of the Disruption, they were then at New College, which the Free Church has established in Edinburgh for training its ministers. Margaret often welcomed them to the Donaldson home and in the summer they would have picnics together to the Pentlands, Habbies Howe or the ruined Barnbougle Castle on the shore at Dalmeny. Here, lying in the grass, they discussed the classes and Professors at New College or Davidson's particular interest, Hebrew, and the best method of teaching it. Despite their evangelical fervour, Bayne soon decided that his true vocation was writing while Davidson was seemingly unable to make up his mind whether or not to become a minister. In the meantime, the friends would sometimes go to hear him occupy the pulpit[2] in the church of the great Victorian preacher and hymn writer, Horatius Bonar.

1. Ibid: Box 13/5. Undated Mss, evidently written soon after Davidson's death in 1902.
2. Although licensed to preach in 1856, Davidson was not ordained until 1870.

The company of these old friends and the ever expanding number of new acquaintances had rapidly dispelled any doubts which secretly Donaldson may have harboured about the wisdom of leaving Stirling: he had no cause for regret. There, youth had denied him the judgment to conceive fully the difficulties he would encounter as Rector; undue responsibility with insufficient experience had reaped anxiety and an ever growing sense of inadequacy which had rapidly eroded his happiness in a position which had promised so much. Here in Edinburgh everything was different. The wearisome burdens and attendant isolation of Rector were replaced by the supportive companionship of his fellow masters and responsibilities comfortably within his ability. Moreover, Edinburgh had so much more to offer than Stirling's provincial society and his life - both professionally and socially - had soon blossomed. Nor could destiny have brought any man interested in education to a more stimulating environment for the city had become the centre of the mounting discussion and debate about the future direction of Scottish schools and Universities. The years ahead would amply vindicate relinquishing his early rectorship and demonstrate that the move to Edinburgh had been on that tide in the affairs of men which leads on to greater things.

# CHAPTER 3.

Donaldson had spent his formative years as student and teacher in several geographic locations, associating with educational theorists and developing his own ideas about the purposes and means of education. In the years ahead he was to earn a renowned reputation as a progressive educationalist, in the context of both schools and Universities. To appreciate the significance of his contribution to education in the latter half of the nineteenth century, it has to be evaluated against the educational world of his time. Scotland's education system had been shaped by historical and social factors and by the middle of the century had become both a source of immense national pride and the subject of increasing controversy.

Before considering these controversies in which Donaldson was to be involved it is necessary to examine how the system came into being and the purposes it was meant to achieve. As early as 1560, the First Book of Discipline, born from the zeal of the Reformation, ordained that a national system of education was to be established throughout Scotland by the planting of a school in each parish. Although the conditions of the time - politically unstable and often violent - precluded these laudable aspirations being fully effected, from this period dates the connection in Scotland between the ethos of the Calvinist Church and the respect the Scots held for learning and individual achievement. Thus, notwithstanding that this sincere declaration for a national system of education could not in practical terms be fulfilled, it had an important and enduring value for "although only a vision it influenced the ideals of the Scottish Nation for centuries to come."[1] What was there then, in this ideal which so conspicuously distinguished the Scottish concept of education from that in England?

1. Elizabeth Haldane, The Scotland of Our Fathers, (Edin., 1933), p.152.

The ideal comprised a number of distinct features. Firstly, it was founded on the premise that every child should have the opportunity of an education; that religious instruction and at least the elements of literacy - so that everyone might have direct access to the Word of God - should be placed within the reach of the whole population. The Calvinist Fathers interpreted this in the widest social sense for in their idealism the parish school was to be innocent of all social distinctions and no child excluded, however lowly his parents' station. Not the least important aspect of the system for the future of education in Scotland was the recognition that the national system comprised both schools and Universities. The subsequent underdevelopment of what today are termed secondary schools was responsible for a direct and important relationship between parish schools and the Universities which was to have important consequences for the history of both.

Education in the parish schools was neither compulsory nor free[1]. The school, schoolhouse and the teacher's salary were the responsibility of the heritors - the landowners in the parish - but parents were required to pay fees: where parents were too poor there was provision for these to be paid for parish funds but such was the pride of the Scottish peasantry and the value attached to education that parents would generally make any sacrifice to find the fees. This acceptance by the community that education should be available to all and was of benefit to the community in general had an important consequence; it was understood that the system "should be established by law, supported by public funds, and supervised by the authorities of Church and State."[2]

1. School attendance became compulsory in 1872 and free in 1891.
2. R.D. Anderson, Education and Opportunity in Victorian Scotland, (Oxf., 1983), p.2.

The extent to which the parish schools achieved their purpose largely reflected local conditions. It was in the Lowlands that the implementation of the statutory intentions came closest to being fulfilled; as early as 1696 in the Lothian counties, sixty one of the sixty five parishes had a school, Fife managed fifty seven out of its sixty parishes and in Angus there was a school in forty of the forty four parishes.[1] This appears commendable but there was no direct correlation between such figures and the proportion of children who had access to education. The reason for this lay in the authorities being obliged to provide only a minimum requirement, namely one school in each parish. Even in the populous Lowlands, parishes greatly varied in size and the location of the parish school often meant that it was physically impossible for some children to attend[2], even at a time when young legs thought little of walking several miles to school.

The expectation that children across the whole social spectrum would rub shoulders in the parish school had never been a reality. The children of the aristocracy and lairds had always been conspicuously absent but below the lairds, social distances in Scotland before the emergence of a middle class were relatively short and the children of country shopkeepers and tradesmen and of the school master himself would mix with those of labourers. Even children for whom distance presented no problem frequently experienced only intermittent attendance dictated by the help they could provide at times such as harvest. Yet despite

1. T.C. Smout, A History of the Scottish People, 1560-1830, (Lond., 1969), p.424.

2. Many parishes covered an enormous area. For example, Glenorchy was sixty miles long by twenty four wide while Buchanan bordering the Lowlands in Stirlingshire was eighteen miles by seven wide. In such circumstances the presumption that all the children might be educated by the provision of a single school was manifestly absurd. Ibid: p. 433.

these limitations, the strength of the parish system was that it did indeed offer an elementary schooling to those children whose homes were sufficiently close to enable them to take advantage of the education offered. Nor was this necessarily limited to the elementary grounding in the three Rs for Scotland had a tradition of school masters of whom many had at least some University education enabling them to teach children showing academic promise those higher subjects which would enable them to go on from the parish school direct to the Universities. In addition many school masters were willing in their own time to instruct older men some years after they had left the parish school which was often responsible for an awareness of learning which bore fruit in later years.

The manifest inadequacy - indeed impossibility - of a single school in an extensive parish succeeding in educating all the children provided an opening for what became known as adventure school; a man or, more often, a woman would provide on their own initiative and in their own homes elementary instruction for a fee. Originally Kirk Sessions, conscious that they were charged with supervising the parish schoolmaster and ensuring that he subscribed to religious orthodoxy, viewed with apprehension such establishments since they were denied the means of extending to them the same Calvinist policing. However by the early eighteenth century it was acknowledged that these adventure schools could perform a useful rôle, bringing at least some education within the reach of many more children and, moreover, without any additional cost to the heritors. The success of the adventure schools was testimony to the importance which parents attached to education for essentially they grew out of mass demand. That these were outwith the supervision

of the Established Church made them attractive to many parents adhering to dissenting sects while others rated the advantage of their children having the opportunity of some education above the risks of being exposed to unorthodox ideas. Thus by the middle of the eighteenth century, although a high proportion of the population in the Lowlands was literate, the state parochial system could not claim undivided credit; it has been estimated that by the early decades of the nineteenth century for every pupil in the parochial schools there were about three attending schools outside the state system.[1]

Although the Scots claimed that their system was "democratic", R.A. Houston has shown that the parish school tended to reinforce the existing social stratification and that the level of literacy and its social distribution were unremarkable when compared with other parts of Europe.[2] Such advantage as Lowland Scotland enjoyed was true only of men since English women demonstrated higher literacy rates than their Scottish counterparts and this was especially marked among lower class women.[3]

The reality of the parish system in the Lowlands reveals it to have been much less than an unqualified success; the parish schools could not provide an education for all the children and levels of literacy were strongly correlated to social status. Although the adventure schools made a significant contribution to meet the deficiencies of the state

1. E.G. West. Economic History Review, Vol. 37, 1984, p.441. These figures from the Digest of Parochial Returns for 1818 excluded Sunday schools, dame schools and the schools for the education of the rich.
2. R.A. Houston, Scottish Literacy and Scottish Identity, (Camb., 1986), p.240.
3. Ibid: p.257.

system, even the great expansion in their number could not fill the gap for, in common with the whole of western Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century, Scotland experienced an unprecedented growth in population. In the Lowlands the system, despite the proliferation of the adventure schools, had proved inadequate to cope with a rapidly increasing poulation and the demographic consequences of industrialisation.

If the Lowlands were believed to have demonstrated a good effort within the minimum requirement of one school for each parish, supplemented by the adventure schools, it could never be represented that this had been matched beyond the Highland Line. The reasons why the system failed there so abysmally are not hard to find. For one thing it was only after the suppression of the Jacobite Rebellion in 1746 and with the far reaching economic and social changes which it precipitated that Government administration had any meaningful influence in the wilder and more inaccessible parts of the Highlands. Whereas in the Lowlands the concept of national education through parish schools had formed part of the people's consciousness and tradition since the Reformation, this had never been the case in the Highlands. Historical factors were partly responsible for this region effectively being divorced from the impact of central government but to an ever greater extent it reflected the enormous problems presented by the topography and thinly scattered communities living in what were often extensive parishes with only the most primitive communication. As if these difficulties were not sufficient there was in addition the problem of language -

few teachers spoke gaelic[1] - and the determined survival of Roman Catholicism, and Episcopalianism, both associated with Jacobite sympathies, long tainted the Highlands with the suspicion of doubtful loyalty and alienated the inhabitants from their countrymen in the more advanced south. Considering the immensity of the difficulties to be overcome, it is remarkable that by the middle of the eighteenth century it has been estimated that fewer than a fifth of the Highland parishes were without a parish school and by the closing years of the century virtually every parish was so provided. But if a single school was inadequate in the much smaller Lowland parishes, it was even less so in the widespread parishes of the Highlands. In the former, the inadequacy had been recognised to the extent of a tolerance - even tacit encouragement - being extended to adventure schools but in the Highlands these did not only have to cope with difficulties confronting the parish schools in the south but also their development was restricted by the markedly different social structure. These different economic and social conditions which militated against the development of education in the Highlands - the evident Jacobinism in many areas, a strong inclination towards Rome and a protestantism at variance with the Established Church, and the absurdity of a single school providing an education for all the children in the parish - led to the establishment in 1709 of the Scottish

1. The Privy Council had banned Gaelic in the parish schools which greatly inhibited learning. "Highland Children failed to relate what they learned to daily life, in which English had no part. While young, they learned lessons parrot-like. When older, they spoke English better than the Lowlanders, with the grammatical correctness given to a foreign tongue, but still with the Gaelic lilt." Dr. W.H. Murray, Rob Roy MacGregor, His Life and Times, Glasgow, 1892), p.54. Even in the late seventeenth century Gaelic was exclusively spoken north of the Highland Line, including the Trossachs, from which it was to make only a slow retreat northwards.

Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. By 1808 the Society had established 189 schools in the Highlands and was providing a much greater number of places than the parish schools. The work of the SSPCK and the Gaelic Societies of Edinburgh, Inverness and Glasgow provided elementary education for children to whom it would otherwise have been denied, but despite such efforts the standard of education in the Highlands fell very far below that achieved in the Lowlands. As in the Lowlands, the increase in population outstripped any improvement in educational provision and illiteracy remained widespread throughout the Highlands until well into the nineteenth century. Houston believes that possibly "the continuation of literacy differentials in areas of Britain in the late nineteenth century implied a persistent cultural divergencies"[1] and this is certainly accurate with reference to the Highlands.

The situation in the burghs differed from that in both the Lowlands and the Highlands. The law vested in the Church the same right of superintendence over schools in the burghs as over those in rural parishes but in general it had a much less strong position in relation to burgh schools. Even before the Reformation some elected their own masters irrespective of the Church and after the Reformation there was a gradual transfer of the management of these schools from the Church to the burgh, a transition facilitated by the latter always having the power to fix fees, masters' salaries and being responsible for providing and maintaining the buildings.[2] However the Reformed Church continued to exercise

1. R.A. Houston, Scottish Literacy and Scottish Identity, p.264
2. G. Grant, History of the Burgh Schools of Scotland, Vol. I, (Lond. & Glas., 1876), p.94.
   The Stirling Grammar School is an example of the Burgh Council having successfully asserted its independence from Church control in the management of the school before the Reformation but the Reformed Church reasserted its authority after the Reformation.

at least part of the authority previously used by the ancient Church and this was generally accepted by the burgh councils either by them acknowledging the authority of the Church or actively seeking its advice on matters pertaining to their schools.[1]

The relationship between the Church and burgh councils varied from burgh to burgh; the degree of supervision which the Church sought to exercise differed and similarly the burghs did not uniformly concede the right of the Church to interfere with the appointment of masters in schools under their patronage.[2] The town councils tended to be proud of their schools and by early in the eighteenth century almost all were grammar schools in that in the education provided an important place was accorded latin. The councillors as a rule took a greater interest in the burgh school than the landward heritors in their parish school: the latter generally used it much less for their own children. In contrast, in most cases, the burgh councillors sent their own children to the burgh school which gave them a personal as well as a corporate interest in the school's welfare. The reputation of the school was closely associated with the standing of the burgh as a whole and the rivalry which tended to develop between the smaller burgh was often to the advantage

1. Ibid: p.85.
2. J. Grant, Burgh Schools, p.90.
   The leading case in this matter of contested jurisdiction was between the presbytery of Elgin and the Town Council which arose in 1845 and the following year over which had the right to fix the day for the Academy examination. In 1861 the Court of Session held that the Academy - which was provided by public subscription and included the old grammar school - was a public school since the constitution remained unaltered and as such was subject to the control of the presbytery. Thus as late as 1861 it was settled that the right of supervision over parochial schools vested by law in the presbytery, extended also to burgh schools. The Church's jubilation was short lived for the same year legislation provided that no master of a burgh school would be subject to the authority of discipline of the Church. Ibid: p.91-93.

of the single school in those burghs. As a result of these circumstances it was in such small burghs that the reality perhaps came closest to the ideal for here there were few or no problems of distance and more than elementary subjects were offered. The constitution of some of these schools was from an early period partly burgh and partly parochial, the patronage being vested jointly in the town council and landward heritors. Such schools acquired their parochial character as a result of the heritors contributing towards maintenance. This was often the case where one school in town and parish was sufficient for the educational wants of the district; both were glad to share expenses as the alternative of maintaining a school individually. The council and presbytery acted together with varying degrees of harmony, the management often being left entirely to the council.

As towns expanded with the industrial revolution, the prestige of the burgh school remained as important as formerly to the Town Council but this could readily be achieved without having regard to the educational needs of working class children. Indeed in many of these schools, such as Aberdeen Grammar where Donaldson had been educated and the Royal High School in Edinburgh where he was now a Master, all pretence at elementary education had been abandoned long ago and the emphasis placed on latin. Sir Walter Scott entered the High School in 1789 and after two years was "turned over to Dr Adams, the Rector. . . It was the fashion to remain two years in his class where we read Caesar and Livy and Sallust in prose, Virgil, Horace and Terence in verse . . ."[1] Clearly the curriculum to which Donaldson was exposed

1. Scott on Himself, A Selection of Autobiographical Writings by Sir Walter Scott, Ed. D. Hewit (Edin., 1981), p.22.

at Aberdeen in the 1840s had not progressed from that which Scott had known in Edinburgh sixty years earlier and although by the time the former arrived at the Royal High School the curriculum had been widened, boys were expected to have had an elementary education before enrolling and the course was still heavily weighted in favour of the classics. The narrowness of the courses offered by the grammar schools gave rise by the mid eighteenth century to a demand for more liberal and practical curriculum. The first academies were intended merely to supplement the grammar schools[1] but often in a short time they superceded or absorbed them and in a few instances, such as in Edinburgh, instead of amalgamating with them became their rivals. Since academies were established by voluntary subscription, their management was vested in a body of subscribers on which the town council usually had a place both as representing the community and because they contributed their funds for the school which as a rule absorbed the old burgh school. The emergence of the academies was itself a further indictment of the state system.

By the middle years of the nineteenth century industrialisation had wrought immense changes in Scottish society and the consequences for education had been for the worse. The system had done nothing to meet the needs arising from the unprecedcented increase and movement in population - and minimum legal requirement for providing a single school in each parish remained unchanged - and in the cities the situation was appalling. In the 1820s the needs of urban education were recognised not by the Church as a state institution but by individual

1. The subjects taught varied from Academy to Academy but often included, mathmatics, science, history, geography, navigation, surveying and architecture.
2. J. Grant, Burgh Schools, p.112.

congregations in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and later in other towns which on their own initiative supported "sessional schools" with the aim of providing an education to match that of the parish schools. Similarily, the Trustees of George Heriot's Hospital, the superiors of the land on which the New Town had been built, found theselves with a rapidly increasing income and were authorized by an Act of Parliament in 1836 to direct the surplus funds towards providing free elementary education in "outdoor schools".[1]

The parish schools were outnumbered by the other types of schools provided by the churches or private enterprise but despite the efforts of the latter to improve the situation it was contended "that in the more densely populated areas. . . . not more than 40 per cent of children receive any schooling."[2] Heritors were reluctant to initiate any improvements in their parish for which they would be required to dig into their pockets while other church and private schools were stretching their effort as best they could and as a result were invariably short of means and often provided an education which was uneven and generally unsupervised. The weaknesses of such a hotchpotch were conflicts, duplications and omissions and had been aggravated by the Disruption. The Free Church - partly as an expression of its ideology, partly from an obligation to provide employment for those teachers who had to resign from parish schools as the price of renouncing the Established Church, and virtually demanded by its pretension to be a national church - had attempted to duplicate the system of schools maintained throughout the parishes by its rival, the Established Church.

1. By 1868 thirteen such schools had been opened.
2. I.G.C. Hutchison, A Political History of Scotland, 1832-1914 (Edin., 1986), p.71.

Even with their teachers accepting salaries well below those in the parochial schools, the financial burden of such duplication soon threatened the Free Church with extreme financial difficulties. Having failed to destroy the eductional rôle of the Established Church by such direct competition, the Free Church changed tactics and gave its support to the reformers who advocated that the existing system be replaced by a scheme of national education to meet the educational needs of the time. The Free Church would thereby secure education for its children outside the control of its rival and at the same time grind its religious axe, since a "national scheme would relieve the Free Church of a heavy financial commitment and also safeguard the employment of its teachers while simultaneously knocking away a prop from the still shaken established Church."[1]

These events also affected the supply of teachers. The requirements of training the clergy so dominated Scottish education that there had been always an enormous oversupply of ministers who took up teaching until - hopefully - they might be called to a parish. Many never were and remained teachers all their lives. Women teachers were confined to some of the adventure schools. But whether man or woman, there was no such thing as teacher training for it was not doubted that anyone with some education, be it great or small - in some of the adventure and charity schools it was very small indeed - must surely be qualified to pass it on. In the parish schools the supply of teachers was assured as long as the clerical profession

1. I.G.C. Hutchison, A Poliical History of Scotland, p. 73. The fidelity and strength of this alliance fluctuated considerably, the question of whether or not religious education should be provided in the curriculum presenting a major difficulty.

remained so overcrowded and the employment opportunities elsewhere severely limited. This had been the status quo in the parish schools since the Reformation but the situation was changed as economic development and the rising status of other professions created new openings for men with some education and the Disruption, with the withdrawal of Free Church schoolmasters from the parish schools, reduced still further clerical unemployment. It was in elementary teaching that the shortage was most evident. In response to this situation the Government in 1846 introduced the pupil-teacher system[1] to provide teachers for elementary schools by which children were paid to stay on at school and after passing an examination they were enabled to continue their training at one of what were termed 'normal colleges' which had been established in Edinburgh and Glasgow in the 1830s and copied by the Free Church after 1843 to ensure a supply of teachers for its own schools. The standard at these colleges did not match that of the Universities, being concerned with turning out teachers who were efficient in the mechanical and often unimaginative methods of the day, rather than widely educated themselves. Throughout the remainder of the century the academic standard of these colleges and their relationship with the Universities was to be a source of protracted and often heated debate in which Donaldson was to pay an important part.

Thus by 1850 when the National Education Association of Scotland was formed to bring about an extensive restructuring of education with the intention of replacing the existing haphazard and inefficient system with a national, unsectarian and secular scheme, education was in the forefront of Scottish politics. The Association represented

1. The system of pupil-teachers was introduced simultaneously in both England and Scotland.

several broad interests - Whigs with their commitment to administrative efficiency and social reform as well as prominent figures in education. Among the latter was, inevitably, Professor Blackie, from whom Donaldson, on becoming his assistant in Edinburgh in the autumn of 1852, learned of the issues which had exercised the Associations's members, Blackie no doubt enlivening the story with his wit and anecdotes. In April that year the Liberal and Free Churchman, James Moncrieff, was appointed Lord Advocate, the Free Church thereby having one of its most prominent laymen at the heart of the Scottish political process. Donaldson was to become associated with Moncrieff in the drafting of Education Bills for Scotland and although the latter first introduced a Bill as early as 1853, it was to be almost twenty years before legislation concerning education in Scotland would be enacted. This delay was largely due to the difficulties of getting time for Scottish legislation and the almost constantly changing allegiances of the Free Church and voluntaries to the changes sought. To consider Scottish Education in the middle years of the nineteenth century is to be confronted with an extraordinary paradox: at a time when the manifest shortcomings of the system were apparent to many, it came to be endowed with an enhanced and peculiar significance for, embodying ideals widely held across the country, the system came to be regarded as an important and distinctive feature of Scottish life and of her heritage which might become the pivot of some sort of national revival. Education became something much more that part of the national heritage - the system was elevated to an object of superiority over England and a symbol of the country's social and cultural independence within the Union. A series of events over the preceding decades had been responsible for this.

The provisions of the Act of Union in 1707 largely reflected the circumstances responsible for precipating the constitutional union of the two kingdoms. The centralisation which the Act brought about was, in most regards, confined to control of the financial and legislative sectors; local autonomy remained uninfringed not only in the Church but also in the judicature and, no less importantly, the educational system. That these institutions would retain their independence was, however, another matter for it was widely assumed that given time they would be progresively assimilated to those of England. The Scots demonstrated a constant and prolonged spiritual resistance to pressure to conform to English practices.

Of course, the notion that Scotland was an equal partner in the Union always had been a fiction; in both population and economic development she ranked far below England and changes to Scottish institutions imposed by the Parliament in London - the smallness of her Parliamentary representation precluded any effective control over legislation affecting Scotland - were inevitable. In 1828 Scotland sustained an important change in her administration. During the eighteenth century there had developed the tradition of there being invariably a "manager", a Scot with knowledge of native institutions and an appreciation of these in Scottish life and who was generally accorded a loose rein to administer the country. In 1828, when the second Lord Melville refused to serve under Canning, no one was appointed to replace him and the system came to an end. Henceforth, Scotland was to be the responsibility of a Minister in London and although the Lord Advocate now assumed, in addition to his judicial responsibilities, administrative and political functions this did not equate with what Scotland had formerly known. Another factor was the Reform Act of 1832,

the changes introduced to the franchise were much greater in Scotland than in England.[1] Certainly abuses remained a feature of the electoral system but the Act was the first assault on the stranglehold which the great magnates had long held over the small Scottish parliamentary constituencies. Although corruption still abounded, particularly in rural constituences and the Liberals themselves were not above manipulating elections and resorting to malpractices for their own advantage, that which had flourished under the severely restricted electorate of the past was identified with the Tories: for more than fifty years after 1832 the Scottish MPs were almost entirely Whig or Liberal and this long ascendency was to be reflected in legislation affecting Scottish education.

These events were compounded by the inexorable social and economic changes being wrought by the ever increasing momentum of industrialisation. As long as Scottish Society had retained a relatively immutable quality based on a primary economy it had been possible to sustain belief in the educational system - regardless of how far it diverged from reality - but when the fundamental structure of society itself began to change the inadequacies and inequalities of the system became even more apparent as it failed to cope with the rapid urbanisation of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. In addition, the nineteenth century witnessed a progressive decline in the influence

1. In Scotland the unreformed electorate had been much more limited than in England. Before 1832, in England 1 in 8 adult males had the vote, whereas in Scotland the ratio was 1 in 125. With the introduction of the new system although the percentage of voters in Scotland (1 in 8) was still below that in England (1 in 5) the relative increase was very much greater. I.G.C. Hutchison, A Political History of Scotland, 1832-1914, (Edin., 1986), p.1.

of the clergy as the other professions gained in prominence. This brought about an increasingly secular aspect to society, apparent in its intellectual outlook and the trend towards secularisation received a substantial increase in its momentum from the events of 1843. The Disruption destroyed the ideal of the parochial community centred on the church: the Established church now no longer represented the majority of the nation and this accelerated the transfer of public institutions, such as schools, to the secular authorities.

It was therefore not a single factor but a number which, individually and cumulatively, was responsible for the steady erosion of Scottish culture and to the distinctly Scottish character of her administration and many of her institutions gradually breaking down. What is important is that as a result of these influences and changes Scotland came to feel herself reduced from, in theory at least, a position of equality within the Union to the status of a province, dominated by the more populous and wealthier England. Yet amidst the tribulations of the poor relation the education system had succeeded in maintaining its national integrity, embodying "an educational tradition which, although often exaggerated and romanticised, certainly emphasised accessibility, general education, and social mobility, in significant contrast to the exclusivity, narrow curriculum, and more rigid social stratification that characterised English educational attitudes."[1]

1. D. Myers, "Scottish Schoolmasters in the Nineteenth Century: Professionalism and politics", in W.M. Hume and H.M. Paterson, Scottish Culture and Scottish and Scottish Education, 1800-1980, (Edin., 1983), p.76

The grievous shortcomings of the system escaped close inspection since its champions were not really interested in critically assessing its achievement: what mattered to them was that it was something peculiarly Scottish, that had survived and been preserved unchanged when so many other Scottish institutions had succumbed to varying degrees of anglicisation and, not least importantly, the education system was - so many Scots comfortably assured themselves - much superior to that in England. Also, education was to enjoy its share of the romaticising of Scotland's past which Scott's novels had begun and this was to colour many people's concept of what it had attained. Of course a poor boy could escape the poverty of his background through education [1] - that this was actually very rare did not matter, the fact that it had been known to happen, that despite the disadvantages and against all and many odds a man had made it, legitimized and lent credence to all that was claimed for the system. And the claims were far from modest; not only was it contended that it afforded educational opportunities for all but also, by the inference that no one was excluded from the means to social advancement except by his own failing, it was believed to contribute to a contented society. R.A. Houston has perfectly expressed this dualism and how the two aspects were able to harmoniously co-exist:

"the myth of equality of opportunity in education which purports to describe the social system actually helps to reproduce it by guiding perceptions and actions. The myth is expressive but it is false. Contradictory phenomenon are simply discounted. The fact that aspects

1. For example, Alexander Bain who became Professor of Logic at Aberdeen in 1860 was the son of an Aberdeenshire weaver and had to leave school at eleven because his parents could not afford any further education. Like David Livingstone, he educated himself while working at a loom, spend a few months at Aberdeen Grammar School and at eighteen secured a bursary at Marischal College.

of the myth are demonstrably false need have little impact on its overall importance and acceptability, since other features, albeit exaggerated and oversimplified, are accepted. Individuals or social groups may share the values associated with one or more elements of the myth without necessarily subscribing to all of them . ."1.

Although the Scots believed that education should be open to all, this does not imply that they thought the scholar's road should be easy. No small part of their respect and admiration for achievement derived from recognition of successful struggle against adversity. Thus, without any close regard to facts, Scotland's achievement in education was raised to the status of a legend, to be treasured and praised, and it was this attitude which confronted reformers who, recognising the reality, were determined that the system, as it existed, should not be allowed to continue. School education was not to be the subject of fundamental legislative change until 1872 but the Universities were to attract the attention of the Government before then. It was the condition of the Scottish Universities which focussed attention and which exposed the conflicting ideology of the traditionalists and the reformers.

The Universities were the other important component in the education system. All five[2] had been founded before 1600: they had survived the vicissitudes of the seventeenth century, the political instability and the often violent struggles between presbyterianism and episcopy but, they did not emerge totally unscathed, for on the Settlement

1. R.A. Houston, Scottish Literacy and the Scottish Identity, p.254.
2. King's College and Marischal College were completely separate Universities until united in 1860 as Aberdeen University.

of 1688 their revenues, which had been largely secured on church lands, were greatly diminished. Notwithstanding these adversities, the Scottish Universities had achieved a truly remarkable intellectual renaissance in the eighteenth century - when many in Europe were more notable for decay - and included among their professors most of the great thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment[1], a flowering the more extraordinary in view of the country's economic backwardness and position on the periphery of Europe.

The Scottish Universities had always exhibited features totally at variance with those prevalent in England, and regarded there as the norm. One of the most evident was that Scottish students entered the Universities at a much earlier age; this was a direct consequence of the total absence over much of the country, especially in rural areas, of secondary schools and the consequent gap between parochial schools and the Universities had been closed by the latter coming down to meet the former. Among this band of youthful scholars was Carlyle who in 1809 when only thirteen[2] trudged from Dumfriesshire to Edinburgh to become a student there but by the time Donaldson arrived in the capital, fifteen was the usual age of entry. Even then it was not surprising that the standard could not match that in the English Universities where students generally entered at eighteen. As late as 1882, Donaldson could write that "In Scotland the Universities have not advanced from the idea which led to their formation. In Scotland there are no universities according to the use of the term

1. Hume was a conspicuous exception.
2. At Marischal College, entry at twelve was considered normal. Anderson, Education & Opportunity, p.29.

now universally prevalent in other countries. The Scottish Universities are schools. . . Even as schools they are entirely antiquated in their arrangements."[1]

The other obvious difference was that the Scottish Universities had a curriculum - it remained virtually unchanged for more than three centuries - which aimed at a broad philosophical education. The proponents of the Scottish University system argued that the result was a much more liberal education than that offered by the English Universities where the education was much more specialised; in Oxford the emphasis was on Greek and at Cambridge on Mathematics. There were however, serious deficiencies in the curriculum and stucture of the Scottish University course. After Donaldson had been at the High School for twenty five years the University curriculum remained unaltered and he concisely exposed its weaknesses.

"The subjects are fixed irrevocably for the time, whether they are suitable for the lads or not, and they are fixed nearly on the Reformation programme. All modern languages and literatures but English are banished, geography and history disappear. There is no continuous training. The lad tackles Latin and Greek for two years and then throws them aside; then he gives himself to English literature and logic and metaphisics, and throws them aside; and then he tries moral philosophy and natural philosophy, and finishes with them. . . . And the lads, after . . . an examination which guarantees that they have got a smattering of these subjects (and) which proves that they have made a decent cram of the professor's lectures, are sent into the world crowned by Scottish universities as Magistri Artium, Masters of all Liberal arts. But as far as the universities are concerned, they are not masters of any art. They have studied nothing thoroughly. They . . . go from them (the Scottish Universities) at an earlier stage than that at which the German lads leave school, and with requirements very far below those necessary for admission to a German university."2.

1. James Donaldson, "On Some Defects in the Educational Organization of Scotland", January 1882, in Contemporary Review, Vol. 41, January-June 1882, (Lond.,) p.141.

2. Ibid: p.149-150.

Yet the conviction that philosophy was the means to a sound general education retained a strong hold over the public mind in Scotland until well into the latter half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, so widespread was the belief among Scots that their Universities were superior to those in England that they came to the seen as an aspect of Scotland's heritage which might form the basis of a national revival. G.E. Davie, in The Democratic Intellect clearly expresses this groundswell as an idea,

> "to re-establish the system on a new and perhaps sounder basis by rallying the dissident factions round the educational system as the item above all others in the inheritance which divided the Scots least . . . it was hoped that the Universities would assume responsibility for the nation's spiritual leadership . . and . . . achieve the practical affirmation of the moral ideas of Scottish life in a form appropriate to the nineteenth century.1.

In this sense, the Universities were viewed as a unifying feature of Scottish life, but, like the schools, they presented a extraodinarily dichotomous aspect - the widely disparate faces of myth and reality - and were in no condition to assume any rôle of leadership, spiritual or otherwise. Since the beginning of the century they had known a marked - even alarming - decline which was the more conspicuous for coming so soon after the remarkable achievement of the late eighteenth century. In the early decades of the nineteenth century the difficulties confronting the Universities - occasioned by both external factors and circumstances within the Universities themselves - relentlessly mounted. Disputes over subject boundaries, professional jealousies between professors and the limitations of a fixed curriculum still largely based on the demands of the Church - to train the clergy had continued to be one of the primary functions of the Universities - accompanied recurrent financial difficulties. It became increasingly

1. G.E. Davie, The Democratic Intellect, (Edin., 1961), p. xvi.

evident from the nature of the problems that any significant changes could only be achieved by legislative intervention by the state since the depleted revenues the Universities had known since 1688 had left them particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in student numbers and economic crises, and with no hope of accumulating reserves for capital expenditure or the foundation of a new chair. By 1826 the finances and administration of the Universities were in such disorder and causing such chronic problems that the Government intervened with the appointment of a Royal Commission.

Although it was the chaos of administration and finances which ultimately had been responsible for the Commission being appointed, the Commissioners saw no reason to confine their enquiries to those areas alone; they were resolved to take full advantage of this opportunity to examine the curriculum and to criticise severely an academic inheritance which was still accorded coniderable respect on the continent. The difficulties which might have been anticipated between Commissioners appointed in such circumstances and the Universities were aggravated by the Government appointing men whose background and education predisposed them to regard those peculiarly Scottish features of the system as retarded and to have little or no sympathy with the national tradition.

The orthodox defence of the Scottish system of early entry to Universities and a general fixed curriculum - such as Donaldson had known - was that it "enables relatively large numbers of people to get - not indeed profound learning - but that knowledge which tends to liberate and make intelligent the mass of the people."[1]

1. Quoted in G.E. Davie, The Democratic Intellect, p.27.

This did not impress the Commissioners any more than the argument that the system contributed towards the stability of society. As with the schools, a system of university education which was theoretically open to all, and thereby the access of social mobility, was believed to counteract the inherent hostility between classes found in societies with a more rigid class structure. For the distinct intellectual style of Scottish Universities was characterised by an openness to make connections between diverse subjects and an interest in general theories. Although it was true that no subject was studied in substantial depth, there was a real intellectual synthesis quite different from the more specialised structure of teaching in English Universities. Scottish Universities tended to stimulate discussion and free thinking and the Scots of the time certainly valued this openness of mind and independence from received ideas which the system encouraged.

The voluminous Report of the Commission eventually appeared in 1830 and recommended a drastic altering of the whole educational system. The tone of the Report has been described as "unsympathetic to the Universities in their existing state, reflecting the impatience of practical men with the muddle, financial incompetence, petty squabbling, and general disorganisation which they had discovered, and which the Report laid bare in much detail." In fairness, much that the Commission complained of was due to the Universities being archaic institutions trying to cope with circumstances which they did not have the means to control. Among the far reaching changes which the Commission urged, the most important was that there should be a permanent rectorial

1. R.D. Anderson, Education and Opportunity in Victorian Scotland, (Oxf., 1983), p.39.

court in each University reponsible for supervising the Profesors, settling disputes, administering the University property and revenue and determining general educational policy.

The extent of the changes urged by the Commission encountered the opposition of the church, the professions and, not least, the Universities themselves. That in the end Parliament passed no legislation to remedy the situation is to be construed less as an indication of apathy on its part than due to the outraged national pride in Scotland where the proposed changes were regarded as striking at this particularly cherished survival of the national heritage. Nothing was done and nothing was resolved - the Scots, indeed seemed quite effectively to have closed ranks. There had however been conspicuous exceptions and foremost among these was Blackie who on his return from Germany carried high the banner of reform against the whole northern academic tradition. For the time being, therefore, the reformers had to concede defeat in their efforts to force extensive reform on the Scottish Universities through legislative intervention but they were undeterred and their resolution unshaken. If one means failed they would try another - they determined that they would endeavour to secure appointeees to Professorial Chairs from their own camp. This could not be other than a slow process but it was not altogether without promise for only three years after their hopes in Parliament had been dashed their efforts were rewarded when their staunch ally, Blackie, was installed in the Latin Chair at Marischal College. Patronage had played an important part in his appointment but it was less than the whole story for this was a Regius chair and the Crown Authorities had passed over Blackie's rival, Melvin, who was backed by the

Aberdeen Professors, since he had identified himself with the resistance to the Commission's recommendations. This appointment exemplified the conflict over the future direction of Scottish education - "in the case of the Aberdeen vacancy, indeed, there is no mistaking the clear cut struggle between the University's loyalties to its humanist tradition, and the determination of the State to destroy that tradition."[1] Time was on the side of the reformers for the stresses inherent in trying to maintain the existing system in the fact of increasing pressure for changes which would bring it closer to the English pattern relentlessly mounted.

The glaring inadequacies of the parochial schools were parallelled in the Universities by a loss of direction and a still further slowing of the momentum as such intellectual remants of the Enlightenment as yet remained petered out amidst barren sectarian struggles at a time when Oxford and Cambridge were being reinvigorated and the German Universities were making the spectacular advances which had been so evident to Blackie and more recently to Donaldson. The number of students continued to fall, the abolition of religious tests removed much of the attraction which the Scottish Universities had formerly held for nonconformists and, with the introduction of competitive entry to the East India Company Civil Service following the Northcote-Trevelyan Report in 1853, the performance of Scottish students was unequivocally revealed to compare unfavourable with those in England.[2]

1. G.E. Davie, The Democratic Intellect, p.234.
2. Although the marking was planned to be equitable between candidates from all the British Universities, classics were awarded more marks than philosophy and consequently students from Oxford and Cambridge were placed at an advantage. The age difference was also considered a relevant factor in the results.

At the same time there was an increasing demand that the Universities should be able to provide the professional - and status - requirements of the expanding middle class. This movement was given a lead by Edinburgh lawyers who, when they looked over the Border, saw the revival of Greek as a prominent feature of the intellectual resurgence in England. They were conscious also of the prestige which a knowledge of Greek attracted and consequently, in their concept of the professinal ideal in education which they sought, they placed an emphasis on this subject. Indeed, the middle class in Scotland was impressed by, and envious of, the social standing associated in general with the English Public Schools and Universities and envious of the careers which opened to those educated therein. Unlike England, Scottish secondary education remained that of the day school, aiming at academic achievement without any pretensions to character building: the educational philosophy of mens sano in corpore sano remained peculiarly English. Although private boarding schools were not uncommon, with few exceptions they lacked the essential feature the reformers sought - prestige.[1]

As the rising middle class became increasingly influential, legislative intervention proved inevitable. While open competition with students from the English Universities had revealed a disparity in academic achievement there was no suggestion that Scotland's students lacked either ability of application - rather that the intellectual values implicit in public examinations were those of the English seats of learning. The question which had to be decided was whether Scottish

1. The first school to be a copy of the English Public Schools, Trinity College, Glenalmond, had opened in 1843. It was, significantly, Episcopalian, - in the early years it included a seminary for that church - expensive, exclusive and generally regarded as a decidedly exotic foreign import.

Universities and the education system in general should be subordinated to these English standards or, alternatively, aim at preserving their independence and maintaining their links with the continent. By the eighteen fifties the University system, like that of the parochial schools, came to be identified with patriotic feelings. Expressive of this was the Association for the Extension of Scottish Universities which soon had a large following. The distinctive character of the Association was largely formulated by its Secretary, James Lorimer[1] who believed that the Universities should become centres for a learned class[2]: he envisaged them receiving Government assistance for the establishment of about forty new chairs which would be necessary if the Universities were to develop so as to evolve a modern pattern of education from the distinctive features of the past. Lorimer expressed these ideas in his book The Universities of Scotland, Past, Present and

1. James Lorimer (1818-1890) jurist and political philosopher had been educated at the Universities of Edinburgh, Berlin and Bonn and the Geneva Academy. In 1865 he was appointed to the newly revived chair in Edinburgh University bearing the name, after Grotius, The Law of Nature and of Nations. In his writings he insisted constantly on the importance to a small country such as Scotland of keeping itself in contact with the great states of Europe and with their distinguished men. He was the father of the renowned Scottish architect and designer, Sir Robert Lorimer, and of the painter, John Lorimer.

2. Lorimer did not merely consider this desirable but essential for the preservation of the status quo: "the necessity of a Learned Class, for the mere safety of the community, comes out almost as clearly as that of a police or a magistracy. They are the great moral "detectives", and unless provision is made by society for their vigilance, it is very possible that those whose boast is that they "mind their own matters", may not be permitted forever to do so in security. Let us remember what the consequences were of Rousseau and his followers being left, with no monitors more adequate to the task of superintending them, that the obsolete and dogmatic priesthood of last century! If France had possessed a class of active men of letters . . . who can say that the Revolution would have taken the shape which it assumed?"
J. Lorimer, The Universities of Scotland, Past, Present and Possible, (Edin., 1854), p.10-11.

Possible and Blackie, not to be outdone, penned The Advancement of Learning in Scotland. Central to Lorimer's concept was that the educational system, far from being obsolete and ripe for abolition, was, if properly directed, capable of entering on a new phase of develoment as vigorous as the old and that the existence of what he called "a non-practical or non-practicing class",[1] as distinct from those engaged in the professions, was indispensable to the political, social and religious well being of the community.

Another Royal Commission was appointed - the Chairman was John Inglis who in 1858 had succeeded Moncrieff as a Tory Lord Advocate and was Vice President of Lorimer's Association - and this time legislation followed in the form of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1858. Although the Report had favoured the traditionalist party the Act made no provision for the extension of the Universities by the state endowment of chairs leaving the way still open for the anglicising party to renew its efforts to gain control of Scottish education. Nothing was done to alter the long established six subject curriculum[2] for the degree or to introduce an entrance examination which would have pushed up both the school leaving age and the school standards. The Act did however give effect to some of the recommendations of the 1830 Report. The most important innovation was the establishing of a University Court for each University, to be chaired by a Rector. The Senate, although losing to the Court its power of patronage, retained the administration of the academic aspects of the University.

1. J. Lorimer, The Universities of Scotland, p.18.

2. The six subjects were Latin, Greek, Mathematics, Logic, Moral Philosophy and Natural Philosophy. In Edinburgh there were seven, since Rhetoric, treated in the other Universities as part of Logic, was there a separate subject.

An essential requirement if the Universities were to develop to satisfy the education demands of the middle class was money and here Scotland paid the price for her individualism. Reformers like Moncrieff and Lorimer had urged that the Government provide the funds required and could validly point to the precedent of the official favour shown to the English and Irish Universities by them being the recipients of government grants; the Scots could not but look enviously at this largesse in which they were not destined to share for,

> "their pleas were not sympathetically regarded at Westminster, since both Government and Opposition were agreed, as a matter of public policy, on the inadvisability of subsidising the Scottish education system so long as it remained virtually independent and attached to un-British standards, and since the Scottish Members of Parliament on both sides of the House, as a result of this gentlemen's agreement between the parties, refused to speak out on the topic."1

It is easy to depict the future of Scottish education - in terms of the direction it was to take - as depending on the outcome of a struggle between two opposing parties, the one "patriotic", intent on defending the traditional system, the other "anglicising", determined that it conform to the English pattern. The term "anglicising" was loosely used and easily misconstrued, tending to suggest that its supporters favoured the English system for no other reason than that it was English and that they had no regard for the traditional system. Such interpretation would be simpliste; whatever the reformers felt about this aspect of Scotland's heritage, they were more concerned about the form of education which would secure for their sons the widest career opporunities - only the English system could offer that. G.E. Davie, in The Democratic Intellect, sees the changes which

1. G.E. Davie, The Democratic Intellect, p.67.

Scottish Universities experienced last century as emanating from a struggle between these opposing parties. It was not, however, as simple as that for as Robert Anderson points out "(a)nglicisation was certainly an important element in the history of Scottish education, but British and Scottish dimensions co-existed in the minds of the Scottish educated class and opinions seldom polarised on the issues.[1]

The reasons for this are not difificult to discern. For one thing, the Universities had so conspicuously decayed, in their teaching, administration and finance, that their condition could no longer be ignored and the responsibility for which England could not be indicted. For another, the pressures on Scottish education represented part of a much larger canvas. During the nineteenth century changes were taking place in many aspect of Scottish life among which the educational ideas emanating from England were only one element. The continual process of cultural change always involves multiple interrelated factors in a complex series of changes and adjustment; this process was continuous but whereas in the past changes had taken place over long periods, by the eighteen fifties the pace of change had noticeably accelerated. As W.H. Hume, in Science, Religion and Education, A Study in Cultural Interaction emphasises, we must resist the "temptation to ascribe all change to some kind of English conspiracy. The sources of social and intellectual change are many and not reducible to a single chain

1. R. Anderson, Education & Opportunity in Victorian Scotland, p.25.

of cause and effect."[1] For ideas on education were also being persuasively influenced from within Scotland itself. No less than other European countries there was an increasing consciousness of the growing ideology of science, a field in which such eminent Scotsmen as Thomson (created Lord Kelvin in 1892), Lister, Lyell and Simpson were making notable contributions.

To Davie, one facet of this struggle was a defence of the democratic tradition against the elitism of the English education system. Such an argument presupposes that Scottish education had been democratic in fact as well as theory, that educational opportunities were eually available to all in a system where class distinction was never of any consequence. In reality democracy in education had never been more than a fiction; Houston has demonstrated that social stratifications were reinforced by the schools and Lorimer, in the van of the patriotic traditionalists, was aiming at the Scottish Universities becoming the centre of a learned class. The concept of such a select group reflects more the class consciousness of Victorian society than any ideas of equality. Davie overstresses both the degree to which education in Scotland was democratic and the extent to which the direction of education was affected by the confrontation of opposing sides. For many of the most important problems afflicting the Universities and prejudicing their development had their origins within the Unversities themselves: the financial difficulties and administrative chaos had sapped their vitality and prevented any academic expansion. The truth is that at any period education is only one of the many interdependent factors responsible for shaping cultural change.

1. W.M. Hume, "Science, Religion and Education, A Study in Cultural Interaction", in Scottish Culture and Scottish Education, 1800-1980, edited W.M. Hume and H.M. Paterson, (Edin., 1983), p.117.

Such then were the issues which were animating the educational scene when Donaldson, now twenty five, left Stirling for Edinburgh in 1856. From the start he was in close contact with two prominent reformers, Leonard Schmitz at the High School and Professor Blackie at the University and he would soon meet other men who were concerning themselves with the future of Scottish education such as James Moncrieff and Professor Lorimer. Blackie's influence on Donaldson had already been strong; he had encouraged him to follow in his own footsteps to the German Universities and, after Blackie had persuaded the Town Council to appoint a tutor, he had worked at his side for two years. Donaldson's quiet and unassuming presence was a marked foil for the older, flamboyant and gregarious Blackie who could be relied on to command a prominent position in the forefront of any educational controversy, but although affording such contrasts in temperament and appearance they shared a common bond in experience and conviction in the changes which were necessary. It was therefore inevitable that with his interest in education, Donaldson would become actively involved in the questions which dominated both school and University reform.

# CHAPTER 4.

Once settled in Edinburgh, Donaldson had resumed the pattern of writing which he had established in Stirling. His literary output at this time included several articles, mostly on classical subjects, for Mackenzie's Biographical Dictionary but at the end of his first year in Edinburgh he "resolved to withdraw from periodical writing and concentrate my studies on one subject. Therefore I chose for special examination the heathen and Christian literature of the first three centuries.[1]

The conclusion is inescapable that both this sudden redirection of his literary energies and the subject selected were in some measure the consequence of his friendship with Davidson. By the time Donaldson had returned to live in Edinburgh Davidson had begun his lifelong research into the language, historical exegesis and theology of the Old Testament and his scholarship had been early recognised when in 1858 he was appointed asistant to John Duncan, Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages at New College, Edinburgh. At the same time as Donaldson began his work on the early Christian Church - either late in 1857 or early the following year - Davidson, who had been talking for some time about editing a Book of the Old Testament on the same plan as scholars had adopted for editing the Latin and Greek classics, had decided to begin on the Book of Job.[2] It cannot be discounted that Donaldson, always academically a high achiever, determined not to be left behind or even outshone by the retiring Davidson but while this may have provided an additional incentive, his motivation was founded on much wider and longer term considerations. Such a substantial work of

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Box 13/12,
2. Ibid: Box 13/5.

scholarship as he now embarked on promised the potential to achieve much greater impact and attention in the academic world than a flow of dispersed articles, however prolific and erudite. Unlike so many of his contemporary schoolmasters who produced learned works while having no aspirations beyond the schoolroom, events were to reveal that Donaldson was fully aware of the uses which such could serve and their leverage value in advancing a career. For besides its contribution to learning, Donaldson saw this work as a means to an end - an University Chair.

When Bayne learned - most probably during 1862 - that Professor Duncan's chair was likely to become vacant, he pressed Davidson to be a candidate. Donaldson not only backed his candidature but, more significantly, urged Davidson to publish that part of his work on Job which was already completed.[1] Davidson, however, had a strong aversion to publishing anything which might possibly excite opposition, shrinking from criticism and controversy to such a degree that ultimately he was to abandon the idea of writing books which might cause controversy. Donaldson now demonstrated that he was much more sharply attuned to what might tilt the balance in an academic appointment and remained so persistent that eventually the reluctant Davidson yielded to his friend's badgering and agreed to have the completed part of his work published and circulated. As a result he was appointed to the Chair.[2]

Davidson's success had been for Donaldson gratifying confirmation of his belief in what such academic writing might achieve

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Box 13/5.
2. Davidson retained the chair until his death in 1902. He was a stimulating teacher and prominent Hebraist and theologian.

for its author and consequently it was with high hopes that in 1863 he applied for the Latin Professorship at London University. He had since 1861 been Extra Professorial Examiner in Classical Literature, Blackie doubtless playing no less an important rôle in securing Donaldson the appointment than he had when the latter had been appointed his assistant almost a decade earlier. Now, two years later, although his great work was not yet finished - he could reflect that Davidson's had not been finished either and that had proved no disadvantage - it was sufficiently advanced for him to submit an outline of the contents in this application:

> "I have now ready for publication a work which discusses minutely the various critical questions that arise in connection with the Christian literature of the first two centuries, gives a full exposition of the theology of the writers, and estimates the effects of the various philosophies and prevailing modes of thought on the development of Christian ideas."

But for Donaldson, Davidson's striking illustration of literary cause and academic effect was not to be repeated. Yet although the chair eluded him, when the following year, 1864, the first volume of the Critical History was published, it was widely acclaimed. Titled in full, A Critical History of Christian Literature and Doctrine from the Death of the Apostles to the Nicene Council, the work appeared in three volumes; the first volume, The Apostolic Fathers, appeared in 1864, volumes two and three, The Apologists, in 1866. The reviews accorded a Critical History acknowledged this to be an outstanding work. "There is nothing to be compared with it in the English language;" The Athenaeum assured its readers, "nothing exactly like or equal to it in German, French, or Latin . . .

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Box 13/12.

and (it) takes a high place in the literary series relating to the time of which it treats."[1] The Weekly Review was equally enthusiastic and confident that "The book deserves, and must we think, secure a European reputation. It reflects honour on Scotland . . ."[2] Its reception in academic - and doubtless more critical - circles was no less laudatory; Professor Harnack, whom Donaldson considered the greatest living authority on early Christianity, was prepared to state twenty years later that the work "is not surpassed by any German publications."[3] In 1865, Aberdeen University hastened to confer the honorary degree of LLD on its now distinguished alumnus and in 1867 he was elected a member of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

The Critical History was the product of the theory of research and scholarship which Donaldson had formed while studying under Blackie and Boeckh, and he acknowledged his indebtedness to them. This is Donaldson setting out the broad and enlightened outlook which he believed a true scholar should possess:

> I formed the idea (under Blackie and Boeckh) that it is the aim of the scholar to strive after a complete and connected view of antiquity in all its activity, and to make the results of his study bear on the life of the present. If this is correct, then it seems to me that the scholar is bound to make himself acquainted with all ancient thought and deed, whether pagan or Christian. In selecting subjects for investigation, I am of opinion that he is unfettered by restrictions of time or belief, and that in publishing them he has to consider mainly whether he has anything new to give to the world, and whether his investigations are likely to stimulate and influence thought."4.

1. The Athenaeum, 18 March 1865.
2. The Weekly Review, 22 April 1865.
3. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Box 13/3.
4. St Andrews UL. Donaldson Papers, Box 13/11.

The Critical History was to be Donaldson's most important literary work, securely establishing his reputation as a scholar. No sooner was this completed than he and the Reverend Alexander Roberts undertook to edit the material on which the History was based. Roberts, the son of a flax spinner, had been a presbyterian minister in Scotland until in 1864 he became minister of Carlton Hill and St Johns Wood in London from where in 1872 he would be appointed Professor of Humanity at St Andrews.[1] The fruitful result of this collaboration was the appearance between 1867 and 1872 of the twenty four volumes of the Ante-nicene Christian Library.

When in 1874 Donaldson revised and republished the first volume of the Critical History, The Apostolic Fathers: A Critical Account of their Genuine Writings and of their Doctrine, the Athenæum was as fulsome in its praise as when the work first appeared a decade earlier, asserting of this revised edition that "nothing in English approaches it in value or conclusiveness."[2] However, The Church Times, the voice of the High Church, was not only more restrained but openly critical, alleging that in endeavouring to prove that the Early Christian Church has only the briefest outlines of a creed and scarcely the rudiments of organisation, Donaldson had made statements inconsistent with the documents on which his work was founded. Such a review from a church paper is a striking contrast to those essentially concerned with the academic value of the work rather than scriptural interpretation. The former marked him against contemporary orthodox theology and, claiming his

1. Alexander Roberts (1826-1901), an alumnus of Aberdeen and the father of fourteen children, retained the Professorship at St Andrews until his death.
2. The Athenæum, 25 June 1875.

theological interpretation faulty, he was, in its sight, an unreliable historian. The Church Times acknowledged the distinction between the literary and theological aspects of the work, conceding that,

> "once it is clearly borne in mind that we are dealing with a writer under an invincible prejudice, much valuable information regarding the mere literary aspect of the Apostolic Fathers can be obtained from his compilation, though as a presentation of his doctrinal views and the ecclesiasticl system, it is entirely untrustworthy."1.

Indeed, while condemning Donaldson's exegesis, The Church Times pontifically decreed that when "dealing with writings where the matters in dispute are merely literary . . . the volume might very well be made a textbook in theological colleges".[2]

Whether or not Donaldson's interpretation, judging him as a theologi_an, was right or wrong is not important here - what is significant is that it reveals him questioning the accepted orthodoxy of the time.[3] He had begun his History in the late 1850s and had been working on the three volumes of this, on the Ante-Nicene Christian Library and revised volume one, ever since. Donaldson

1. The Church Times, 18 September 1874.
2. Ibid.
3. The extent to which Donaldson diverged from accepted theology is evidenced by his assertion in the Apostolic Fathers that "They (early Christians) might speculate as they liked, they might even believe Christ, their great leader, to be of merely human origin. But so long as they were willing to follow him, and to keep in the goodly fellowship of Christians, the Church welcomed them." The Church Times called this an "extraordinary statement" and at the time it certainly was, since to suggest that one could be a Christian while believing that Christ might be of human origin was contrary to one of the most fundamental tenets of Christian doctrine, belief in the divinity of Christ.

wrote on theological subjects with profound erudition and assured Christian convictions in an intellectual climate dominated by the controversies between science and theology, following the seismic shock caused by the appearance of Darwin's The Origin of Species in 1859. The strictures of The Church Times on Donaldson's exegesis implies that his intellectual curiosity was incapable of being confined within any narrow theological margins and substantiates the premise that he had been too much of a free thinker at New College at accept unquestioningly the orthodox theological doctrine which he would have been required to profess as a condition of ordination.[1] This may also explain why Donaldson so conspicuously moved away from the fervent Congregationalism which had been such a feature of his adolescence to the much broader allegiance to that "one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church" in terms of which the Nicene Council expressed the creed of the Christian Church long before that church became concerned with denominational differences. Donaldson combined a sincere reverence with an openness of mind, independence of received ideas and total lack of prejudice on any matters pertaining to religion which at that time was as rare asit was admirable. For his breadth of mind was not that tolerance often parented by apathy and indifference but rather the expression of a mind which scholarship in its finest sense had truly emancipated.

1. Donaldson could not but have known that the Congregationalists had expelled five students from their Glasgow Theological Academy for imbibing the views of the Rev. James Morrison on the universality of the offer of divine grace. Although this action had been widely regarded as an infringement of that liberty in dogmatic belief and statement which constituted one of the fandamental principles of the Congregational Church, the truth was that the liberty of thought which the Congregationalists professed to so value, was relative rather than absolute.

In 1865, while Donaldson was enjoying the academic acclamation following the publication the previous year of the first volume of the Apostolic Fathers, Blackie had finished his work on Homer. This was the product of his labours over the past twelve years and the author's enthusiasm resulted in a colossal work - in addition to the three volumes of translation and notes there was also an introductory volume endeavouring to encompass the whole subject of the personal Homer, the Epic Cycle, the minstrel and heroic artist, the authenticity of the text and the various forms of translation. The late summer saw Blackie descend on London with habitual gusto to find a publisher only to discover, to his surprise and chagrin, that none would accept it. Mortified, but nothing if not resilient, he bounced back to Edinburgh and arranged for it to be published there. By November the proofs of the Dissertations and the translation were issuing from the press whereupon Blackie sent copies to four friends erudite in the classics, among whom Donaldson was numbered, for their criticism. This was evidently not intended as a perfunctory gesture and neither was it received as such for he received amendments and comments on the looseness of his versification sufficiently valued for him to correct many of the lines. Donaldson in particular demonstrated an earnest commitment, concerning himself not only with the translation but in addition undertaking a complete revisal of all the notes. That he embarked on this self imposed task is some measure of his regard for Blackie especially at a time when simultaneously he was coping with his recently acquired responsibilities as Rector at the High School and the second

1. Anna M. Stoddart, John Stuart Blackie, (Lond., 1895) p.237.

and third volumes of the Apolostolic Fathers would not be published until the following year. By this labour of love, his scholarship was tacitly acknowledged to be a match for Blackie's - the child had become father of the man.

During these years when he was bent on establishing a name for himself in the academic world, Donaldson's energy seemed inexhaustible. Even before he had completed the three volumes of A Critical History, he again began to write articles on subjects relating to education and for many years in the 1860s was editor of a magazine called The Museum and English Journal of Education.[1] In addition to his responsibilities as editor he contributed substantial articles on an extraordinarily wide range of subjects under the umbrella of education - such as The Education of Boys, The End of Intellectual Education and Is there a Science of Education?[2]

The latter, which first appeared in the Museum on 1 November 1864, is of particular interest. As a classical scholar with a theological training it would not have been suprising if Donaldson had evinced a lack of interest in science, its methods and applications. Scottish education had from its inception served a definite

1. This magazine first appeared in April 1861 and changed its name in January 1864 to The Museum and English Journal of Education. That it ceased in 1868 was not a reflection on the quality of this publication but "proof positive that there is not a large enugh public in this country alone for an educational magazine however excellent." St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 7183, letter from Robert H. Quick, an educational writer, 2 September 1880.

2. Since most of the articles The Museum were published anonymously it is only possible to identify with certainty those which Donaldson contributed where these correspond to manuscripts preserved in the Donaldson Papers.

and recognized religious purpose in training the clergy and it would have been unremarkable had Donaldson proved indifferent or even antagonistic to the claims of science. On the contrary, he demonstrated a breadth of objective assessment which enabled him to appreciate the significance and possibilities of scientific methods. Now in this article, he asks two questions - Is there a science of education? and Is that science of use to practical education? To Donaldson,

> "education is the conscious efforts of human beings to draw out the natures of other human beings to the utmost perfection. Education, being a conscious effort to effect a purpose, and implying the application of means to an end, is an art. When, therefore, we speak of a science of education, we do not mean to assert that education is itself a science, but that it is based on science; that a set of laws which it is the business of science to discover can be used in the work of education." 1.

This brought him to a theme which was to interest him all his life - the relationship between psychology and physiology; he saw physical education as the result of applied physiology, and, analogously, mental education he believed could be effected by an applied psychology. This connection is particularly interesting since at this period it was relatively rare for those educated in the humanities to extend their intellectual enquiry into the area of scientific concepts and in recognising the potential in an integration of science and the humanities Donaldson was far ahead of his time in educational circles. "It is principally in educational works" he asserted, "that one will find the facts, and many of the laws which ought to have their place in a scientific exposition of the phenomena of mind. . . If we have a psychology

1. The Museum and English Journal of Education, (Lond., 1865), p.281.

which will give us the laws which regulate the activities of the mind, then the answer (to whether there is a science of education) must be in the affirmative."[1]

Donaldson believed that a knowledge of such a science of education would be of enormous benefit in determining the best methods of education, in estimating the value of various subjects - what today is called curriculum development - and, the corollary, in assessing results.[2] In demonstrating in this way that there was indeed a science of education and that a knowledge of this science would be of great benefit to education in the ways he described "the practical conclusion follows that . . . there should be in every one of our Universities professorships of Paideutics. In the meantime teachers should everywhere clamour for the establishment of such professorships as the Educational Institute of Scotland has for years persisted in doing."[3] Donaldson was in the van of thinking in this regard for he was writing more than ten years before a Chair of Education had been established at any Scottish University and even then with a noticeable lack of enthusiasm from the Government.

In 1874 this article, now retitled On the Science of Education, was published with four other essays - The History of Education in Prussia, The History of Education in England, The Aim of Primary Education and On the Relation of Education to the Working Classes- as a book under the title Lectures on Education.[4]

1. Ibid:
2. Ibid. (Lond., 1865) p.285.
3. Ibid.
4. This was later republished in America.

On the Relation of Education to the Working Classes had, like On the Science of Education, been published in The Museum, appearing there in April 1886 after Donaldson had delivered it as an address in Stirling, Dunfermline and Edinburgh[1]. The relationship expounded was as tenuous as it was laboured, relating to a society where concepts of equality were concerned with theory rather than practice, in which there was a class which laboured hard and another which was essentially leisured. The working class had no time, Donaldson argued, to search after "truth" and to achieve balanced and informed opinions of their own. His readers would have had no difficulty in accepting this - for many of the working class, life was dominated by the struggle just to stay alive, labouring long hours in insecure employment with little effective legislation to protect workers - men, women and children - from exploitation amidst appalling and often dangerous conditions in a country which had become the workshop of the world. In stark contrast, University Professors could devote their whole lives in this pursuit of truth.[2] (He also saw this academic thinking as contributing to the Victorian crusade for moral uplift, of which the working classes were generally considered to be particularly in need, for "all these investigations into truth lead mankind gradually to a nobler moral state."[3]) The relationship between the classes was that those who toiled from dawn to dusk (often before and after), had passed down to them those truths which academics might hew at

1. Even before he was Rector, Donaldson was sought after as a speaker and he may not have discounted the opportunities for self advertisement which such platforms afforded.
2. It is indicative of the degree to which Donaldson's social identification had moved away from his working class background athat he does not condemn, nor even criticize, the inequality of the class structure but presents a premise which may be construed as an apolgia for the latter.
3. James Donaldson, Lectures on Education, (Edin., 1874), p.149.

leisure from their brains: one is left with the suspicion that the benefits accruing from this relationship were unlikely to have been apparent to the overwhelming majority of the working class. Donaldson, however, conceded that University men seldom came into contact with workmen - social convention decreed that the upper classes spoke to workmen from necessity and not for anything approaching social intercourse. "But," Donaldson explained, in case it might be thought that social distance vitiated his argument, "they (academics) directly influence the minds which directly influence the workman, the lawmaker, the literary man, and the preacher."[1]

This was no doubt true, although other influences formed the attitudes of the working class than those from above, but it was also true that the latter would benefit more overall from a good system of primary education than handed down truths from their social betters. Donaldson's On the Aim of Primary Education, delivered in 1871 to the High School Literary Society, is concerned with his educational philosophy on primary education which he believed always was a far wider aim than merely reading, writing and arithmetic.[2] To him, education was about high ideals, it was "To make the pupil as perfect in every direction as we can, to bring out his nature into fullest activity on all sides, to develop his powers

1. Ibid: p.150.
2. Donaldson regarded the three Rs as little more than acquired skills, asserting that in reading and writing "there is next to nothing of educative instruction. The learning to read and the learning to write are mechanical operatons. . . There is little more educative power in arithmetic, yet it is small. Indeed, the whole of arithmetic is a mere expansion of one and one makes two, and one from two is one. That is all the idea that is i it." Ibid: p.121-122.

in an equable and harmonious completeness, so far as time and circumstances permit. This is the work of education."[1] It was this emancipation from the generally narrow construction accorded the word "education" which so distinguished Donaldson's idea of the aim of primary education. He regarded the discipline and instruction of the school as being the means "to bring out all the powers of the child, and to form character as well as train the intellectual faculties. [2]

The achievement of this aim was inseparably linked to, and wholly dependent on, the quality of the teachers who were the essential means without which the fullest development of the child could not be achieve, for

> ". . . it is absolutely requisite that the schoolmaster be a man of considerable culture, possessed of insight into human nature, and especially young human nature, well acquainted with the best methods of training, and having a high aim for his own life and a noble moral tone in his own conduct. For here it is not the quantity of instruction that is of consequence so much as the quality, provided that it be varied enough; it is not the amount of information given, but the interest excited; not the truths mechanically conveyed, but the living and abiding impressions produced on the soul. The teacher has really a cure of souls committed to him . . . Once find the right man, and he must be trusted in the discharge of his duty." 3.

In this essay Donaldson set out his wide interpretation of education and the importance that he attached to the standard of the teachers These were to form the foundation of his opposition down the years to the provisions of the Education Act in 1872, in particular the restricted curriculum, and his antagonism to the training given to teachers in Training Colleges.

1. Ibid: p. 104.
2. Ibid: p.113.
3. Ibid: p.118.

The other lectures, The History of Education in Prussia and The History of Education in England, were delivered in January 1874 to the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh. In them he reviewed the history of popular education in these countries with an account of the relevant legislation, personalities and attitude. Predictably Prussia was praised and the success of its education system attributed to the organisation at the different levels, the systematic training of teachers, and the state supporting the schools with a permanent source of income. The fundamental idea was that every grade of school had a "special aim and purpose assigned to it"[1] and the government then made the arrangements necessary to implement these aims. "In fact" Donaldson pointed out, "I consider to be one chief element in the success of the Prussian system, that the rulers have always sought for the men best skilled in the science and art of education to guide them in all educational legislation . . . The Prussian management does not listen to any control from uneducated or half-educated men."[2] Lest anyone was of a mind to be sceptical of the achievements of the Prussian system its ultimate and incontrovertible justification was there for all

1. Ibid: p.5.
2. Ibid: p.27 & 34.
   This can be compared with the situation in Britain described in On the Relation of Education to the Working Classes: "The nature of the action of the school upon the minds of the pupils can be accurately ascertained only by careful psychological investigation and close and long continued observation. It is not a matter which everyone can determine for himself offhand. And yet there is nothing more common than to find men who have taken no trouble to search into principles and to make themselves acquainted with the history of education, giving forth and maintaining in the most dogmatic manner their opinions on the subjects, effects, and methods of education." Ibid. p.39

to see. "The Prussian people have had faith in education . . . they believe that education makes better citizens, better soldiers, better fathers, and better men. And history records, in great successes in wars, and still greater successes in the realms of thought and science, that her faith has not been in vain."[1]

In comparison with the Prussian system and what it had achieved, education in England made a very poor showing. It seems strange that Donaldson should have chosen to talk on English education rather than Scottish but his choice was most likely determined by the former affording an example of a country more closely approximating to Prussia in size and economic importance. Although the statistics and historical details related to England, the Government attitudes to education there can be read as equally applicable to Scotland. To Donaldson the English system was an unqualified failure and he had no doubt that,

> ". . . what must stand as the great cause, is a low appreciation of the value of education, and an ignorance of its great laws; but the statement is true of a large portion of the middle and higher classes. In a Prussian circle of cultured men anywhere you will find that they have a clear perception of the best methods of education. They know at once the aims and methods of educating. But it is totally different in English society." 2.

Donaldson had no hesitation in expressing his belief that if the country continued along the same road "it will be ages before England reaches the thoroughness of the Prussian system".[3]

1. Ibid: p.40
2. James Donaldson, Lectures on Education, (Edin., 1874) p.46.
3. Ibid: p.94.

It is not difficult to exercise a negative criticism but Donaldson was always constructive in his ideas and confidently could enumerate what required to be done. Firstly, it was the duty of the head of a Department of Education to point out the aim of primary education (as defined by Donaldson) and to ensure that this was carried out in every school. Then, as the counterpart, every means must be taken to ensure a regular supply of well trained teachers, "the first condition of a successful scheme of education."[1] He urged the abolition of the existing form of government grants and, instead, the funding of schools from rates "the only constitutional method of supporting schools."[2] Attention should be given to the introduction of a phonetic alphabet[3] and lastly, the education of children "of the middle and upper classes"[4] had to be organised on a national basis.

Although all these pieces had been published before, presented as a book they attracted, as Donaldson anticipated, greater attention than their individual appearance over a decade. Today the content would be expressed in half the length, but brevity and clarity of exposition were not valued features of Victorian writing; the content and style of Lectures on Education struck the right note for the serious and progressive educationalists of the 1870s and the book was correspondingly well received. "The contents are

1. Ibid:
2. Ibid: p.95.
3. The inclusion of this recommendation indicates the importance Donaldson attached to phonetic spelling.
   "One obstacle to success in an English education deserves special attention. Our method of spelling causes enormous difficulties to children, and entails an incalculable waste of time."
   Ibid: p.96.
4. It is interesting that he should have confined this recommendation to children of these classes. There is no mention of working class children. Ibid. p.96.

altogether so fresh, hopeful, energising and catholic" a reviewer wrote pretentiously in the fulsome praise which ensured sales, "that the most blasé and despondent student can hardly fail to feel his intellectual nature awakened by their perusal. The style is unadorned, nay, not to say inadequate, but on every page there are impressed pregnant thoughts and an assured invigorating confidence in God and man."[1] If Donaldson's writing conveyed his confidence in God and man, it succeeded no less in conveying confidence in himself for the significance of these essays is that between their covers he expressed his credo for a national system of education; not only his individual concept of education but, equally importantly, the means by which he believed it would successfully be achieved. Over the succeeding years he was to expound his ideas to Commissions and Committees and from innumerable platforms across the country.

Donaldson's remarkable powers of concentration enabled him to apply himself to work on several fronts simultaneously. In 1875 he published Expiatory and Substitutionary Scarifices of the Greeks which he had been writing while editing the Ante-Nicene Library, the twenty fourth and last volume of which had appeared, with Lectures on Education, the previous year. He then immediately began work on the History of Byzantine and Neo-Hellenic Literature for the Encyclopoedia Britannica and also an extensive contribution entitled Education for an American Encyclopoedia of Education.[2]

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Box 3/8, unidentified press cutting.
2. Published in America by Kiddle and Chew in 1878.

While during these early years in Edinburgh, Donaldson was producing his magnum opus, in itself a prodigious work of scholarships, and a steady output of other writing, he was conscientiously applying himself to his work as a Classics Master. In 1865, Leonhard Schmitz retired and for several months there was no Rector. There was keen competition for the position with applicants from both England and Scotland, and it was not until the early summer of 1866 that Donaldson was unanimously appointed.[1]

When Schmitz retired the Town Council appointed a Committee to examine the curriculum and its recommendations were implemented in the autumn of 1866, introducing substantial changes. With the expressed aim of increased efficiency, the Classical Department was to be wholly separate from the other subjects taught, but also increased recognition was given to "modern" subjects, a term used to cover subjects other than those that came within the narrow interpretation of classical education. There was now a Classical Department with three Masters; an English Department where the two masters taught, in addition to English, modern history and geography; two Masters in a modern Languages Department teaching French and German; a Maths Department with two masters and a fifth Department which covered science and the preparation of boys for the Civil Service. There had been efforts over the previous twenty years to introduce science to the curriculum but now for the first time provision was made for the systematic teaching of the subject. Boys were taught Botany in the first year and then moved through

1. Altogether there were nineteen applicants for this prestigious appointment, including, besides Donaldson, two other masters at the High School.

Natural History, Natural Philosophy and, in the last two years, inorganic and organic compounds. While this was a significant innovation, the teaching of these subjects did not equate with the concept of science teaching today, particularly in the extent of pupil participation. "Of course," Donaldson explained, as if stating the obvious, "it is not intended to do anything else than foster the faculties of observation and inductive reasoning which these sciences draw out, and open the mind to many of the marvellous facts which they disclose."[1] Despite these innovations, the School remained strongly classical in orientation; all the pupils had to take Latin when they entered the School and Greek, also, in the third year, whereas arithmetic, modern languages and the sciences were regarded as extra - and optional - subjects.[2]

The Masters received what a Royal Commission described as "a most trifling salary"[3] from the Burgh, and were largely dependent on the fees from their pupils. Boys were supposed to be able to read and write before being accepted as pupils but the importance of fees for the Masters' income meant that in practice the requirement was not strictly enforced and for the same reason there was a real disincentive to limit the size of the classes. These were indeed often large and the first year that he was Rector and situation was further aggravated when the number of boys for the session 1866-67 session rose to 388 from 299 the previous year.[4] Donaldson acknowledged that the classes were too large but considered this

1. RHS: Rector's Report, 1866-67, p.7.
2. Argyll Commission, Report Vol. II, 1868, p.98.
3. Ibid: p.99, 104.
   The fees ranged from £1.00 a term for the Rector's classics course to ten shillings for optional subjects.
4. RHS: Rector's Report, 1866-67.

the only objection which could possibly be taken to the High School. However he and the other masters were opposed to any suggestions that the size of the classes be reduced and student teachers employed. "Surely," Donaldson reasoned, with that confidence which does not anticipate contradiction, "the principle adopted in the High School of having teachers of established reputation and accredited position is a much sounder one, even though there is the risk of very large classes."[1] The "risk" was in fact a reality - in his first year at the School, Donaldson's class had numbered seventy - but as at Stirling, the size of classes had important implications for the Masters' salaries; as long as these were related to the number of pupils they could attract, any move to limit the size would assuredly encounter resolute and united opposition. Publicly, at least, Donaldson aligned himself with the other masters but lacking the power to coerce them in limiting their classes, he had no realistic alternative short of a breach with his staff. Although, under Donaldson's Rectorship, the number of boys at the High School steadily rose, it was not until 1872 that it was practicable to restrict the number in any class. That year the Scottish Education Act established a common fee fund which largely destroyed the incentive to competition between Masters for pupils and the cause of the inordinate increase in the size of classes regardless of any purely educational considerations, thereby removing the greatest obstacle to improved organisation.[2] In July 1872 the Masters agreed to introduce a system of limited classes now that they would be no worse off and the celerity with which Donaldson acted once the legislation was enacted implies

1. RHS: Rector's Report, 1866-67, p.9.
2. J. Strong, A History of Secondary Education in Scotland, (Oxf., 1909), p.198.

that he was anxious to put an end to these large classes at the earliest opportunity. From the beginning of the next session, whenever the number in a class exceeded forty, another class of the same grade would be formed.[1]

1. RHS: Minutes, Meeting 5 July 1872.

# CHAPTER 5.

During his long life in education Donaldson was to have many dealings with Royal Commissions. His first encounter came in 1864 when the Whig-Liberal Government[1] established a Commission in response to the persistent discontent in Scotland arising from the system of Government Grants for schools which had been introduced there. Until 1833 Parliament had been content to settle the level of school masters' stipends, leaving it to the heritors, kirk sessions and presbyteries to manage the parish schools, allowing town councils a free hand in burgh schools and according private schools no official recognition whatsoever. That year Parliament approved a scheme of grants for building schools and following this, in 1839, a Committee of the Privy Council was established to administer grant aid schools. Eligibility for a grant required the school submitting to inspection; while some were prepared to accept this measure of control as the price of financial assistance others chose to retain their complete independence and manage without the grant. Some years later, in 1858, the Newcastle Commission was established under the Chairmanship of the Duke of Newcastle to investigate elementary education but only in England. The Report recommended that the grant system should be twofold, depending on the attendance, staffing and general efficiency of the school and also on the number of children passing an annual examination in reading, writing and arithmetic. The Government introduced this system, known as the Code, in 1861, replacing the numerous grants which had previously been in operation. Although the Report had been compiled without any inquiries being extended to Scottish education, the Government introduced the same basis for grants to Scotland.

1. Known as the Triumvirate after the leaders Palmerston, Russell and Gladstone, whose co-operation was the condition of its survival.

This decision to extend to Scotland the recommendations of a Commission confined solely to England "implied", as the contemporary School Inspector John Kerr succinctly expressed it,

"absolute ignorance of our educational history. In England national education was but of yesterday. In Scotland it was over two hundred years old. In England scarcely anything beyond the "beggarly elements" were taught: in Scotland lads went straight from the village school to the University. The English national and the Scottish parish teacher presented the same contrast. The former had never set foot in a University; the latter was often, and in several counties invariably, a graduate." 1.

The revelation of such ignorance on the part of the Government was bad enough but what was even more wounding to Scottish pride was the inescapable conclusion that Scotland was considered of such little consequence that any claims to separate consideration were derisory and not to be entertained. Insult had been heaped on injury by the introduction of payment by results, an idea totally alien to the Scottish concept of education and one which resulted in an immediate disincentive to teach the higher subjects, always such a distinctive feature of parish education in Scotland.[2] Furthermore, teachers in a school receiving a grant were required to hold a Government Certificate and, since it was assumed that these would be elementary teachers, any university education conferred no advantage. In a country which always had taken pride in the academic level of its parish teachers, it was predictable that this innovation would not be well received. No less a cause of indignation was the fact that grants were intended only for the children of those classes supporting themselves by manual

2. Scottish Culture and Scottish Education, 1800-1980, (Edin., 1983) Ed. W.H. Humes & H.M. Paterson, (Edin., 1983), "A Reinterpretation of 'Payment by Results' in Scotland, 1861-72", T. Wilson, p.99-100.

1. J. Kerr, Memories Grave and Gay, (Lond. & Edin. 1903), p.70-71.

labour. This raised real practical problems in many schools in Scotland where children from a spectrum of social background mixed together; it was unheard of that these schools should provide an education only for the children of manual workers.

The Minister responsible for education from 1859 until 1864 and actively interested in drafting the Code, was Robert Lowe, later Lord Sherbrooke who rigidly adhered to the policy that the Government should provide education only for the children of those parents who could not afford to pay for it. His reasoning was simple, uncomplicated by any philosophy of social progress, for he was convinced as Donaldson recorded half a century later "there was no use of educating the masses, that they were better without education, more obedient to their superiors and less inclined to adopt new political ideas."[1] Securing the social order had priority over increasing the availability of education for the lower classes which was pregnant with the risk of giving them ideas above their station.

These Revised Codes for educational grants, instituted in 1861 and reissued the following year, caused outrage in Scotland but all entreaties were of no avail: deputations from Scotland made fruitless jouneys to London where officials adamantly defended the accepted orthodox policy of the Education Department, asserting as further support for their stance that the Scottish system resulted in the neglect of average children in favour of giving more assistance to

1. James Donaldson, Home Rule and Scottish Education, Scottish Nation Pamphlet, No. 1, p.7. This was published under the auspices of The Scottish Home Rule League and although undated, was published either late in 1913 or early the following year.

the promising pupil. But such was the outcry maintained in Scotland that in 1864 the Government felt compelled to appoint a Royal Commission to report on the general state of education in the country. That Donaldson was considered well informed to speak on educational developments beyond the confines of the High School and regarded as a theorist of progressive ideas was acknowledged when he was invited to give evidence before what was to be known as the Argyll Commission.[1]

He urged the Commission to establish a national system of secondary education. "I do not think," he told the Commissioners, "we ever can have a thorough education unless by the union of the whole of each community (country, burgh, etc.) in the adoption of one system."[2] While conceding that it was possible this might be achieved voluntarily, he urged Government intervention to secure it, "because Government is the natural means of effect and carrying out a complete combination of the people; because there is much more chance for the work being thus done, and much greater probability that a system thus established will be permanent."[3] His conviction was founded on a number of grounds: he believed that the success of teaching was largely dependent on the quality of the teacher and that the only way of obtaining men of thorough qualifications was by a national system which would also be used to ensure that the maximum benefit was achieved from the

1. The Chairman was the 8th Duke of Argyll (1822-1900), a leading Whig politician who served in various posts under Aberdeen, Palmerston and Gladstone until breaking with the latter over Home Rule for Ireland.
2. Argyll Commission, Third Report, Part I, 1868, p.196.
3. Ibid: p.197.

teaching. Indeed, he had a "strong conviction of the necessity of a public system of education adapted to all classes of the community."[1] Perceiving the benefits of a career structure for teachers, he suggested the introduction of first, second and third masterships below the Rector, through which stages a teacher might rise. Later he was to advocate a similar career structure within the Universities.[2]

With the rise of an affluent professional and commercial business class in the middle years of the nineteenth century there was an increasing tendency for parents to select for their children schools which matched their ideas of their social position. The democratic aspect of the Scottish tradition had always been associated with a degree of fiction but Victorian Scotland witnessed an acceleration in this divergence between theory and fact. Donaldson was too honest about social realities to pay lip service to the ideal of an education for all, irrespective of background, and honestly acknowledged that there need not be any correlation between the scale of fees charged and the quality of the education bought since parents would pay for the social connotation.[3] He believed that, if the burgh system were properly worked out, "the mixed character of the schools, as far as it should

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid: p.193. "this gradation would show itself in a gradation of salary and it precedence on any occasions where all cannot be got together. . . In all other respects I think the masters would be on an equality; and the more respect paid them, and the more independence given them, the more likely it is that the tone of their teaching will be high." Ibid: p.194.
3. Ibid: p.194. "This matter of respectability, again, is very much determined by the fees charged; and as people may pay different prices for box, pit, and gallery to see the same play, so they are willing to pay very different prices for the same education."

be allowedto exist, would have a beneficial effect."[1] Donaldson's concept of a burgh school system was one where there would be provision for at least three grades of scholars; in the schools in each grade the curriculum would depend on the age at which the pupils anticipated leaving school, their character would reflect the educational aims and parents would decide to which they would send their child, the choice depending on their aims for that child. He interpreted the democratic concept in terms of the practical realities of the situation but he acknowledged that opportunities should be kept open to talent:

> ". . . in a national system some method should be devised by which even the poorest boy, if he has ability, may attend the highest class of schools. And such boys in a school would not be injurious, but would act powerfully for good. For I think that it should be only the extremely talented poor who should be aided in obtaining the highest education. It is mere waste of money and time to provide a high education for a poor, dull or average boy, and it is often cruelty to the boy himself." 2.

In considering the relationship between the burgh schools and the Universities, Donaldson pressed for some coordination of the work of these, and specifically that the work of the lowest class of the University should be above that of the highest in the schools and, to effect that, end he advocated raising the level of the Universities.

The Commission published its main report - it had surveyed an astonishing 4,450 schools[3] - which related only to primary schools

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid: p.195.
3. Argyll Commission, Third Report Vol. I, p.x-xi and xxvi-xxvii, 1868.

in 1867. It found the complaints against the restriction of grants to the labouring classes well founded but, apart from this, considered that the Revised Code was sound and recommended its implementation. The following year, the Commission's Report on Burgh and middle class schools appeared and no significant changes were recommended; there were to be limited state grants for buildings and repairs, and teachers' salaries and special grants to encourage the teaching of higher subjects in those parish schools where no burgh schools existed. The rigidity of Lowe's policy was rejected and to some extent the Commission invoked the policy which had so distinguished Scots Education:

"It cannot be too often repeated, that the theory of our School system, as originally conceived, was to supply every member of the community with the means of obtaining for his children not only the elements of education, but such instruction as would fit him to pass to the Burgh School, and thence to the University, or directly to the University from the parish school . . . In any changes, therefore, which may be made in the School system of Scotland, the connection between the Universities and the schools should be strengthened and not relaxed, and the ancient theory of Scottish National Education should be scrupulously respected and carefully developed."1.

Between the summer of 1867 and the middle of the following year the Argyll Commission Report was not the only one in the news. For in addition the High School had been visited by French Inspectors preparing a report for their Government and also by an Assistant Commissioner for an English Schools Inquiry. Donaldson had no hesitation in allowing inspection by the French, believing that as a nation they "understand the Scotch and sympathize with them"[2] - perhaps something of the affinity and empathy of the Auld Alliance still survived - and his judgment appeared well founded, for when their report appeared

1. Argyll Commission, Third Report Vol. I, p. x-xi and xxvi-xxvii, 1868.
2. RHS, Rector's Report, 1867-68.

it stated of the High School, that although "less exclusive . . . than the classic Eton, it has conceded a large part of the pupil's time to the mother tongue. The circle of instruction has been greatly enlarged and the High School of Edinburgh can henceforth proudly take its place by the side of our best lyceés in France."[1] All this was most gratifying but the Assistant Commissioners from the Argyll Commission, Messrs Harvey and Sellar, and the Assistant Commissioner from the English Schools Inquiry, R.D. Fearon, were much less flattering

Fearon had visited the High School between 30 June and 4 July 1866, when there was no Rector; he acknowledged in his report that under these circumstances it was difficult to form a fair judgment of the School, especially the attainment of the higher classes which would have been taught by the Rector. When his report on the state of middle class schools was published as a Parliamentary Blue Book in the spring of 1868 there was uproar among the Masters at the High School. After breakfast one Saturday - Donaldson had introduced regular meetings of Masters on Saturday mornings following breakfast together, a meal generally accompanied by good humoured conversation and cheerful camaraderie - the Masters "proceeded sternly to face the dangers of the present crisis."[2] For such they saw it to be; they were outraged and indignant that Fearon had failed to procure full statistics about the pupils attending the School, of if he had, he was charged with being careless "in assigning the pupils to a lower social class in society, than that to which they actually belong."[3] It was true, as Fearon conceded, that he had only inspected one class register

1. Ibid.
2. RHS: Minutes, Meeting 28 March 1868.
3. Argyll Commission, Report Vol. IV, 1868, p.104.

which a Master had made available to him. None of the others seems to have been asked for this but since the one Fearon saw covered fifty six pupils, it is improbable that examining a greater number of boys' backgrounds would have appreciably altered his findings.[1]

Not only had the social sensibilities of the Masters been offended but they no less angered that the Report "grossly exaggerated the mismanagement and disorder"[2] of the Mathematics and Arithmetic Class. Fearon found this class "most unsatisfactory: the behaviour of the boys being the only unpleasant reminiscence which I retain from my Scottish tour . . . and altogether there was nothing in the class which I can commend to the Commissioners notice.[3] The Masters' complaint, that the Report was one sided and misleading, in this instance had some grounds since, by the time the Report appeared, a certain Mr Munn had been appointed Master of the offending class, a man described elsewhere in the Report - he had been a Master at Dumfries Academy when Fearon inspected it - as one of the ablest mathematics teachers that he had encountered in Scotland. But Fearon was only reporting on things as he found them; his Report could not be expected to take account of changes which had been made since his visit.

1. Fearon classified these fifty six boys according to parental occupation as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Landed Proprietors | 4 |
| Professional men | 17 |
| Merchants or wholesale | 7 |
| Superior traders, large shopkeepers | 20 |
| Inferior traders, small shopkeepers, clerks | 8 |
| Labourers, mechanics, etc. | 0 |

2. R.H.S: Minutes, Meeting 28 March 1868.
3. Argyll Commission, Report, Vol. IV, 1868, p.115.

However it was his overall impression of the School which mortified them. "I was on the whole," he recorded" a little disappointed with the results of my examination of the School. I do not consider it by any means the most deserving of imitation or commendation among the burgh schools which I visited . . . Some of this may have been due to the vacancy in the Rectorship; but more I think, due to the fact that the School is endeavouring to give a kind of education which is not thoroughly suitable to the class of boys who at present attend it." There must have been a staff room gasp when the masters read on. "The social class of pupils in this school is not what it was, the school has become more decidedly middle than it was: but the curriculum has not been sufficiently modified to meet the change."[1]

There is no evidence to suggest that the social distribution of the boys of the High School had altered but Fearon's comments reveal a paradox, for although Donaldson asserted that the School was "a public school and recognized no distinction of classes", that view was confined to theory. As the Argyll Commission pointed out, "The social position of the scholars at the High School is much the same as in all the burgh schools in the larger towns in Scotland. The fees are too high for the humbler classes, and the higher prefer to send their sons abroad or to England for their education."[2] It was one thing to subscribe to the ideal of a school providing an education for all, it was quite another to be told that the social class which the School represented had gone down. Donaldson always professed to support the ideal on the one hand while on the other being decidedly attracted by the High School's upper class connotation.

1. Ibid: p.117

2. Argyll Commission, Third Report, Vol. II, p.26.

To make matters worse, Fearon had another criticism; he reported the "low condition of scientific and modern teaching"[1] and noted that this was not balanced by any superior classics teaching and as a consequence "the number of scholars are diminishing, so that the maintenance of the existing curriculum, while it alienates the middle classes in Edinburgh from their High School, and is gradually driving them into private schools, produces no real counterbalancing advantages."[2] While Fearon accepted that part of the trouble was due to there being no Rector - a former Dux was running the School in the interim - the defects in the curriculum and the resulting fall in numbers had already attracted the attention of the Town Council which had established a Committee to consider these. The changes subsequently introduced and Donaldson's appointment as Rector - it is not feasible to attempt to apportion the credit - achieved the desired effect for the enrolment increased by almost a hundred during Donaldson's first year as Rector.[3] Nevertheless, it was felt that the Report did the High School a great injustice and the Secretary of the Masters' Meetings - one of their number doubled in this rôle - was directed to write to the Governor of the Education Committee of the Town Council requesting that he refute the unfavourable references to the School contained in the Report by writing to the Edinburgh papers.

While Mr Fearon's Report on the School was being so indignantly dismembered, he could congratulate himself on having placed a safe distance between his person and Edinburgh, for as the minutes record

1. Ibid: Vol. VI, p.118.
2. Ibid.
3. RHS: Rector's Report, 1866-1867.

"After vowing vengeance against the Commissioner, in a variety of forms, and threatening him with corporal chastisement and mutilation, as soon as he should reappear in Edinburgh, or its neighbourhood, the meeting under the auspices of the Rector broke up in a tumult of righteous indignation."[1]

The staff of the High School may have felt better and their dented pride somewhat restored after this expression of intent to the hapless Mr Fearon but only two months later the Argyll Report was published. The High School certainly fared much better but the Report was not devoid of criticism. By the time A.C. Sellar, one of the Assistant Commissioners visited the School on 27 and 28 March 1867, nine months after Fearon, the changes in the curriculum were being implemented. Inspecting Donaldson at work with a class Sellar reported that "There was much attention and good order on part of the boys and the teaching was interesting"[2], but in the English Department, where the origins of the Scottish Language and physical geography were being taught, the Report considered that the teaching was more in the nature of lecturing than teaching and the boys showed "neither interest nor animation, and no intelligent knowledge of the subject."[3] This criticism was denounced by the masters as "scandalous" but such was their self assurance that they readily found the reason for Sellar's adverse report; it was "traced to the mean jealousy of felt inferiority and conscious ignorance."[4]

However Sellar praised the School more than he criticised it; Donaldson had been Rector less than a year, yet to him must fall

1. RHS: Minutes, Meeting 28 March 1868.
2. Argyll Commission, Third Report, Vol. II, 1868, p.220.
3. Ibid: p.223.
4. RHS: Minutes, Meeting 28 March 1868.

much of the credit for this much more laudable report. The new curriculum was praised; "The theory of a modern education is more completely carried out in this school than in any we have visited . . . The theory of the education offered offered is wide, sensible, and thorough, and if carried out successfully in practice, cannot fail to keep up the popularity of the school . . . The relation of the Rector and masters to the managing body, to each other, and to the boys seemed good, and the whole tone of the school appeared to us to be high.[1] This commendation of the high tone of the school may have saved Sellar from being sentenced to the vengeance awaiting Fearon should he have had the temerity to return to Edinburgh.

Both Sellar and the other Assistant Commissioner, Thomas Harvey, recommended that Grammar Schools should be subject to Government inspection. The truth was that the High School masters believed themselves to be above such inspection but they realised that this would be an insufficient reason to put forward for opposing the idea. Others were found. They professed that such inspection as was recommended was not worth having, since Grammar Schools were "already open to inspection of a watchful public at every hour of the day", and that a similar function was performed by the existence of the adventure schools with which they were "almost always opposed, if not surrounded."[2]

As arguments against inspection these were fatuous but the third reason submitted revealed how the Masters really felt - they believed they were superior to any inspection:

1. Argyll Commission, Third Report, Vol. II, 1868, p.223.
2. RHS: Minutes, Meeting 2 May 1868.

"Grammar School teachers, as men of academic training, do not need inspection nor reporting, any more than Professors in the University . . . " and they clearly had no doubt that they were superior to any Inspector or Commissioner, for the reasoning continued, " . . . the official reports of said Inspectors or Commissioners abounding in inaccuracies of classical scholarship! in defects of mathematical knowledge, in solescisms of English grammar, and other shortcomings, which clearly revealed the unfitness of their respective authors for some of the functions with which they have been entrusted by the Government of this country."[1]

Thus almost as soon as he had become Rector, Donaldson was involved in the politics of education. Before his appointment much of his time free from teaching responsibilities had been dedicated to The Apostolic Fathers. This had earned him an acknowledged standing in the world of learning which together with the position of Rector of the Royal High School, the most prestigious burgh school in Scotland, assured him a platform from which his ideas on education would be accorded a respectful, even deferential, hearing. He recognized too that his views would carry greater weight if he could represent his staff as pledged to the same crusading cause. As early as February 1868 the staff meetings which Donaldson had introduced were discussing the policy of the Government expressed in proposed legislation and its implications for the parochial system and later that year Donaldson arranged for himself and the other masters to meet with the Liberal MP for the Elgin Burghs, Grant Duff [2], who in 1866 had been elected Rector of Aberdeen University. Unlike most Rectors, usually a prominent political or literary figure, who presented an inaugural address and then retired

1. Ibid: Meeting 24 November 1868.
2. Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant Duff (1829-1906) was Rector from 1866 until 1872. Elected for the Elgin Burghs in 1857, he retained the seat until appointed Governor of Madras in 1881. In the Bar exams in 1854 he had passed with honours, second to Sir James Fitjames Stephens, later a famous jurist and the father of Virginia Woolf, who became one of his most intimate friends.

from the scene, Aberdeen had tended to elect a Rector who chaired the Court meetings, was actively involved in the affairs of the University and saw himself as the representative of public opinion, as the 1858 Act has envisaged. Grant Duff had allied himself to the Professors agitating for reform and was using his position as Rector to make University reform - which inescapably would affect schools - an open political issue.

At this meeting held in John Burnett's Private Hotel at 1 Castle Street - intriguingly recorded in the minutes as "a house of entertainment Diversonum or Campona" - Donaldsn pressed that education be national (as opposed to sectarian or denominational); compulsory; maintained by rates on heritors and other ratepayers and partly by Treasury Grants; that tenure ad vitam aut culpam be preserved and that it should include not only crime or vice but any kind of blameworthiness. Donaldson expressly intimated that he was speaking not only for himself but also for his colleagues - their presence was convenient and persuasive evidence of this - and the burgh school masters of Scotland and claimed a sympathetic hearing by mentioning "their official services, their learning and their poverty". Grant Duff rose to the occasion by confirming that the Edinburgh High School and the Academy "were beyond and above offical inspection"[1] but that other schools both sought and needed the guidance afforded by inspection and he believed that after a national system of education was effected the High School, like similar schools in Germany, might be exempt.

1. RHS: Minutes, Meeting 24 November 1868.

The belief of grammar school masters that they were superior to other schoolmasters was not wholly the creation of their imaginations - they were after all regarded as the elite of the profession - but their lack of charity to less well placed teachers is startling and indeed their indifference to these members of the same profession is less than endearing. "Primary schools," the meeting in John Burnett's agreed, "were of course cheerfully handed over to Government Inspection, on the ground of comparative ignorance, vulgarity, barbarism and incompetency of the teachers."[1] Thus condemned were many well educated, dedicated, poorly housed and impoverished dominies in the parish schools the length and breadth of Scotland.

The Senior Classical Master doubled as secretary for these staff meetings[2] which are the earliest recorded at the High School, and while the minutes are generally, although not always, short, they were expressed in a quite extraordinarily literary style imbuing events with the aura of Pickwickian comedy. While Donaldson was speaking to Grant Duff on the serious matter of Endowments, the reform of which he was to pursue with a single minded determination, there were,

"Audible movements in the lobby (of John Burnett's), and repeated openings and shuttings of the door of the Hon. Member's apartments, together with culinary odours alike suggestive and stimulating, awakened in the mind of the meeting a dark suspicion that the Hon. Member's dinner was cooling, and that his family might be starving. Whereupon the Rector hastily seized his hat; three of his colleagues hurried after him; while the Secretary, in an agony about the fancied loss

1. Ibid: Meeting 24 November 1868.
2. The recording of the minutes of these meetings was haphazard for on the flyleaf of the small black minute book is inscribed "copied verbatim et libertatis from the rough notes of the Secretary, John Carmichael MA Snr Classical Master at the HS March 1871." Minutes of meetings subsequent to that of 24 November could not be transcribed, being "defective and indecipherable" and consequently have been lost.

of his umbrella and cravat brought up the rear. Messrs Ross and McDonald then rushed to a Club House in Princes Street. They were pursued hotly, but hand passibus aigrus by the Rector and Secretary who imagined that their junior colleagues were fleeing from Sheriff Officers. The more aged functionaries of the High School eventually overtook the younger and more agile members of the staff viz the English Master and his Classical comrade: and were relieved to find them rejoicing in a telegram which announced the triumphs of the Rt Honourable W.E. Gladstone, in Lancashire." 1

To Donaldson the proposed legislation and its implications were of the utmost importance yet reading today the minutes of these meetings during his early years as Rector what comes across with their period vignettes is farce and hilarity. What Donaldson thought as he read them can only be imagined but he must have been disappointed that he had manifestly failed to inspire his Masters with his own earnest dedication and deep interest in educational reform and political involvement to achieve this. Perhaps amidst his own enthusiasm he was unable to realise - or to accept - that a number of the Masters had little real interest in what happened outside the gates of the High School and one cannot but suspect that the rollicking fun with which they invested these meetings was their antidote to the boredom which such meetings readily engendered in them. Certainly after this time there is no further record of Donaldson attempting to unite the Masters into corporate action as some sort of pressure group. If he was disappointed by the Masters' lack of serious application to the educational issues confronting them, he himself was undeterred and was to make a notable contribution to a number of Royal Commissions and other bodies concerned with education. One of the first of these in which he had become actively involved was the Educational Institute of Scotland.

1. RHS: Minutes, Meeting 24 November 1868. It was this election which brought the Liberals to power and Gladstone to the Premiership for the first time, 1868-74.

The EIS had been established in 1847 with two distinct but complementary objectives, one professional and the other political. That teachers, both of parochial and burgh schools, felt the need to organise themselves in an association reflected the conditions and movements of the time when an increasing number of trades and professions were forming organisations to give expression to their corporate ideals and to regulate the standards for admission. The EIS is important because, although not the earliest association of teachers in Britain,[1] it was "by far the most ambitious, vigorous and successful of British nineteenth century teachers' organisations."[2]

It was inevitable that Donaldson would become involved in the EIS: in addition to his own interest in education, the first President had been Leonhard Schmitz - the inaugural meeting was held in the High School - and Donaldson was elected a Fellow of the EIS while Rector at Stirling. It seems likely that Donaldson and Schmitz first met through their association with the EIS and that this led to the latter inviting Donaldson to join his staff at the High School. The initial energy for establishing the Institute came from teachers in the burgh and academy schools in Edinburgh and Glasgow, arising from their shared conviction that school masters should "fix the standard of professional attainment, license their own members, and regulate the matters which concern their peculiar duties and interests, as well as physicians, surgeons, clergy, lawyers or any other professional body."[3] Such

1. The Ulster Association dated from 1840 and the College of Preceptors in London was founded the year before the EIS.
2. Douglas Myers, "Scottish Schoolmasters in the Nineteenth Century: Professionalism and Politics", in W.M. Humes and H.M. Paterson, Scottish Culture and Scottish Education, 1800-1980, (Edin., 1983), p.83.
3. A.J. Belford, Centenary Handbook of the EIS, (Edin., 1947), p.68.

control, it was confidently expected, was the means of achieving the progressive raising of the professional status of the teacher notwithstanding that there was a considerable range of status among teachers themselves, those in parish schools being accorded a standing noticeably inferior to those in burgh schools. The EIS, however, did not confine its activities to achieving greater professional recognition but also believed that its membership would enable it to exert strong influence on the Government, whatever its political complexion, in the direction and development of educational policy. For the EIS advertised itself, with some justification, as being a truly national association representing teachers of all denominations and levels of teaching.

Yet, despite the undoubted dedication of many of its members and their belief in the aims of the EIS, it was unable to achieve either the professional recognition it sought or political influence on Government policy. For this there were a number of reasons, both within the Institute's membership and external. In its early years it had to function under the severe limitations imposed by the tensions between members and their inability to agree on fundamental issues which denied them presenting a united front. And the sources of dissension were many:

> "Ecclesiastical rivalry affected the teachers of Scotland as well as other classes of citizens. Political partisanship was sometimes stronger than professional interest. The parish schools were, to all intents and purposes, the Church of Scotland schools. To suggest an extension of the parish school system to enable other denominations to share equal rights was once to rouse antagonisms inside the Institute. To propose the abolition of the religious tests on teachers was taken as a direct challenge to the long prevailing privileged of the Established Church. To petition Parliament to augment the salaries of parochial schoolmasters was to open for discussion the salary problems of all teachers." 1

1. A.J. Belford, Centenary Handbook of the EIS, (Edin., 1947), p.114.

The establishment of the Institute and the spread of its membership was not universally welcomed and this was particularly evident in rural areas. The Church of Scotland viewed EIS schemes concerning national education as threatening its own traditional relationship with the parish schools and could rely on support from the conservative lairds. And of course the Church was even less enthusiastic over any proposal with the inherent probability of it being called on to increase salaries, improve conditions and relinquish its control over teachers. Thus the parochial schoolmasters, although often dissatisfied with their conditions and Church control, were inclined to remain loyal to the Church and reluctant to become embroiled in political controversy. Those teaching in burgh and higher level schools were in a different position and could afford to embark on a more independent line for "they were the elite of the occupation - well educated, talented, independent prosperous, respected. They had taken the lead in establishing the organisation and they defined, articulated and fully supported both its professional and its political objectives."[1]

In an age when anyone could open up a school, the owners of adventure schools - which it had to be admitted played an important part in providing educational opportunities which would in many places otherwise not have existed - were not required to demonstrate any educational attainment themselves or worthiness of character and inadequate teachers were seen to discredit the profession as a whole. To remedy this, for many years the EIS sought a Royal Charter with the provision that

1. D. Myers, "Scottish Schoolmasters in the Nineteenth Century: Professionalism and Politics" in Scottish Culture and Scottish Education, 1800-1980, ed. W.M. Humes and H.M. Paterson, (Edin., 1983), p.85.

anyone hired as a teacher who was to be paid from public funds would be required to hold a diploma or certificate from the Institute. The forces opposed to the Institute ensured that this was never achieved; the value of the EIS certificates were as a result greatly reduced, and in addition they were in competition with Government certificates granted by the Privy Council. For several years during the 1850s a clause recognising the certificates of the Institute was drafted into the proposed Scottish Bills to reform education but they were on every occasion struck out. (None of the Bills was successful anyway). After these abortive legislative efforts Scotland had to wait until after a Royal Commission and an English act in 1870 before legislation affecting Scottish education was enacted and then with a complexion noticeably less Scottish than the provisions of the earlier Bills. For these reasons the achievements of the Institute in its early years fell far short of its ideals and "instead of the reality of professional power and status Scottish teachers . . . had to content themselves with the lofty but insubstantial rhetoric of professionalism."[1]

In 1868 Donaldson was elected President of the EIS. Although there was a distinct tendency for the Institute, particularly in its early years, to appoint rectors and burgh school masters to the presidency in the belief that such men would give the Institute greater credibility and professional standing and while the position did not necessarily imply an active rôle, Donaldson's long association with Schmitz and his later involvement with the Educational News suggests that he had been an active enthusiast for the aims of the Institute at least since his arrival in Edinburgh twelve years earlier.

1. Ibid: p.91.

Unfortunately the records of the EIS pertaining to this period have not been preserved for they would have provided a valuable source of information about Donaldson's involvement in education at this time.

Donaldson's term as President ended in 1869 and that year the family left Mayfield Street and returned to the New Town where Donaldson had bought a house in Great King Street, one of Georgian Edinburgh's most splendid facades: Number 20 rose four floors above the basement with its servants' door at the foot of the area steps. Besides the drawing room and dining room there was a parlour and boudoir all furnished in the taste of the upper class Victorian home. The drawing room could boast a square piano and a French clock on the chimney piece, a loo table and whatnots, even a leopard skin and for the overstuffed look which to the Victorians spoke of comfort there were ottomans and a "marchioness couch".[1]

Donaldson had travelled a long way since leaving Aberdeen less than twenty years before. His position as Rector of the High School, his known interest and active participation in educational reform, his reputation as a scholar and the articles on aspects of education which flowed from his pen ensured that although still only in his late thirties he was one of the most prominent and respected figures in the capital. He was never reluctant to accept the offer of a platform and from Great King Street often he would set out in the evening to address meetings. At Craigie hall in St Andrews Square he gave the concluding lecture of a series arranged by the High School

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 5/1. Donaldson sold this house and auctioned most of the contents when he left Edinburgh in 1882.
2. Ibid: Vol. I, p.36, 54, 60, 61. These were all in the early months of 1871.

Literary Association. His topic was the proposed Education Bill and soon after he was addressing the EIS on the same subject. At the Hope Park Literary Association he spoke on Education, its Objects and Methods and at the Workmen's Club, on Self Culture.[2] In an age when wireless, television and the cinema were still unimagined and efforts at self improvement adjudged a virtue, lectures enjoyed great popularity. It would be hard today to imagine working men crowding in to a hall to listen, with unfeigned interest, to a lecture on Self Culture yet one cannot but wonder what mid Victorian artisans made of Donaldson reading "passages from Xenophon's Memorabilia, showing how Socrates examined general statements by putting questions as to particulars."[1]

Ibid: Vol. I, p.61.

# CHAPTER 6.

Although in 1858 Parliament had taken steps to effect changes in the Scottish Universities nothing had yet been done about the parochial schools. This had, at the best, been effective only in an uneven and haphazard way; if in the past it had been unable to provide an elementary education for all children, it had even less prospect of success in achieving this when the economic, social and demographic changes resulting from industrialisation produced a society very different from that of former days. The problems of distance, thin and scattered population and the Gaelic language had been plausible justification for the lack of schools in parts of the country but none of these could be used to defend a system which failed to provide any education for thousands of children in the rapidly expanding urban areas.

Between 1851 and 1869 James Moncrieff[1], while Lord Advocate, endeavoured to remedy the appalling defects which had long been evident in the Scottish concept of parochial education. Donaldson had a long association with Moncrieff, regarding him highly for his efforts on behalf of Scottish education,[2] and working closely with him for the retention of many of its traditional features. In 1869, Moncrieff prepared a Parochial Schools Bill whereby the system of the parish schools would be applied to the towns as well as the country districts

1. James Moncrieff (1811-1900) was Lord Advocate 1851-28, 1859-66 and again from 1868 until the following year when he was appointed Lord Justice Clerk. In 1874 created Baron Moncrieff.

2. "Moncrieff took the deepest interest in educational questiona and made various attempts to set in order the educational affairs of Scotland."
St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Box 13/6, James Donaldson, Home Rule and Scottish Education, p.1.

with the teachers having the same tenure and privileges as in the parish schools. Donaldson was fulsome in his praise for Moncrieff's Bill because it "adhered to the old Scottish traditions in the provisions which it made"[1], and in his Presidential Address to the EIS that year he expressed his conviction "that we shall have the best and most thorough system of primary education in the world."[2] But the Bill, for which Donaldson had such high hopes, was defeated in the Lords. Given his regard for Moncrieff and his own position as Rector of the High School, Donaldson was an obvious person from whom Moncrieff might seek advice; almost certainly he was involved with Moncrieff in formulating the provisions of the Bill.

Donaldson was convinced that the High School provided an example of the sort of education that should be provided by the proposed legislation. "Of one thing I am sure," he wrote in his Annual Report in the summer of 1871 when a Bill, similar to that defeated in 1869 was before Parliament,

> "that if our country is to take its proper place in education two principles which distinguish the High School will be thoroughly established. The first is, that a school to do its work of educating all the powers of the boy - his affections as well as his intellect - must be a public school, regulated by the State, managed by the representatives of the country. The other principle is, that only a man who devotes his life to his work, who has mastered his subject and reached a certain maturity of thought, and who has taken a part in the duties and responsibilities of Society, can <u>educate</u>. Casual teachers may interest and cram but there is an infinite gulf between the real educator and the mere crammer. Cram is bad in every way; real education is one of the greatest blessings." 3

The Bill of 1871 was even less successful in its parliamentary progress than its predecessor of 1869, for it was withdrawn.

1. Ibid: p.6.
2. Ibid. p.4.
3. RHS: Rector's Report, 1870-71.

The Education (Scotland) Act eventually enacted in 1872 differed in many significant respects from the earlier Bills, especially in the absence of those features which would have tended to maintain the parochial tradition and which Donaldson had striven to ensure were preserved. He described what happened;

"Lord Young's name[1] was on the back of this Bill, but he was not in favour of the changes that had been made in regard to secondary schools. He consulted me, and probably others also, as to what provisions should be made for secondary education, and we proposed certain amendments which would have secured a sound system of management of secondary schools and would have promoted the welfare of these schools in a high degree, but every one of the amendments was put aside and alteration was admitted in the clauses relating to high schools. This was due to the English ideas in regard to secondary schools, for Lord Young said nothing at the time about this matter, but he told me afterwards that it was the persistent obstinacy of Mr Robert Lowe 2 that specially created obstacles to the amendments." 3.

Donaldson was never to forget nor forgive this defeat, nor was time to assuage his anger; after the passing of half a century his indignation had in no degree abated. Now a School Board was to be established in every parish and burgh; each Board would take over all the schools

1. George Young (1819-1907, succeeded Moncrieff as Lord Advocate in 1869, following a brilliant career at the Scottish Bar. In 1857 he had been junior counsel to John Inglis at the celebrated murder trial of Madelene Smith when it was believed that the accused owed her aquittal to the former's skill in preparing the defence. A Liberal, he represented Wigtown from 1865 until 1874 in which year he was appointed a judge of the Court of Session with the title Lord Young, retaining his seat on the Bench for the following thirty one years.
2. Robert Lowe (1816-1892) was at this time Chancellor of the Exchequer and a Lord of the Treasury (1868-74) during Gladstone's first administration. As Vice-President of the Committee of the Privy Council he had resolutely opposed any proposals to develop education among the English working classes. In 1880 created 1st and only Viscount Sherbrooke.
3. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Box 13/6, Home Rule and Scottish Education, p.7. This was written either late in 1913 or early in the following year.

in its area together with such other schools, including those of the various churches, as might be voluntarily transferred. By this means was a national system of education enforced on Scotland while at the same time the parish system effectively disappeared. The Act made no provision for the teaching of higher subjects which had been a notable feature of the former system, the teachers became employees of the Boards without the privileges of tenure, pension rights or provision for widows and families in the event of a schoolmaster's death. The authority to certify teachers was taken from the Universities and entrusted henceforth to the Scotch Education Department which was also to undertake their training in newly established Teacher Training colleges and to determine the subjects to be taught. This Department which the Act brought into being was based in London and until the creation of the Scotch Office in 1885 lacked any convincing independence from the English Education Department.

Since the Reformation more than three centuries earlier, the High School had been under the control of the Town Council. Now, when it was proposed that the higher class public schools should form part of this national system "the Town Council at once showed their willingness that their time honoured school should be included in the Act."[1] Short of resigning, Donaldson had no realistic alternative to making the best of this situation and he managed to convey more than token enthusiasm when, in his first Annual Report after the passing of the Act, he professed that "we have every reason to be abundantly satisfied with the working of the Education Act, as far as we are concerned."[2] Since his criticism of the legislation dated from its

1. RHS: Rector's Report, 1872-73.
2. Ibid.

enactment this claim may suggest inconsistency but he must have been conscious that as the appointee of the Council his Report was not an appropriate place to express personal views, more especially since his opinion of the Act was evidently at variance with that of the Council.

Donaldson always believed that this Act had been a disastrous mistake for Scottish education; that "an end was put so far as could be done, to the interest which the people of Scotland took in their schools . . . This whole change was the direct result of the application of English ideas to Scottish education."[1] To ascribe the effects of this Act which Donaldson so deplored solely to English ideas is to over simplify the situation. Certainly, the legislation revealed a pronounced lack of sensitivity towards Scottish traditions in education but it also reflected the political philosophy of the time, the orthodox Liberal policy of laissez faire. Further, the Scots had for so long congratulated themselves on what many still regarded as a well ordered and progressive system of education - failing, almost as some form of hysterical blindness, to distinguish the ideal from the reality - "that while we have been complacently calling ourselves the best educated people in Christendom, and therefore not careful to improve what we thought so near perfect, England and other countries have fully confessed their defects, and striven honestly to find the remedy."[2]

1. St Andrews U.L: Donaldson Papers, Box 13/6, Home Rule and Scottish Education, p.7.
2. John Shairp, Principal of the United College, University of St Andrews, quoted by G.E. Davie, The Democratic Intellect, (Edin., 1961), p.44.

There was much truth in this. The Scots had fostered and cherished with pride their system of education as an ideal but the factors which were reshaping the intellectual and social configuration of Scotland in the middle of the nineteenth century were also exposing the idea to be a myth; the fiction became ever greater as the reality increasingly diverged from the ideal and it was the reality that was judged and found wanting. To some extent, the accusations levelled against "anglicising" policies was a deflected anger; it was more convenient and more obvious, to blame English politicians for an ignorance and lack of understanding of Scottish values than to take stock and find any shortcomings closer to home. Because of the political and economic dominance of England which tends to penetrate all aspects of Scottish life it is easy to see Scotland as constantly under "threat" from England and a "temptation to ascribe all change to some sort of English conspiracy. The courses of social and intellectual change are many and are not reducible to a single chain of cause and effect."[1]

This is much closer to the truth, for cultural change, of which education forms a part, by its very nature involves constant and complex interactions over a lengthy period. As considered in Chapter 3 the Parochial system had never been effective over the whole country and although in some areas it had proved adequate in a much simpler pre-industrial society, it manifestly had failed utterly to develop to educate the children crowded into expanding towns. There are institutions which can survive and fulfil their purpose for long periods and successfully adapt to relatively small changes in the society in which they function but do not inherently have the means to adjust

1. W.M. Humes, "Science, Religion and Education: A Study in Cultural Interaction", in Scottish Culture and Scottish and Scottish Education, 1800-1980, Ed. W.M. Humes and H.M. Paterson, (Edin., 1983, p.117.

when confronted with a society undergoing rapid change. The parish system of education exemplifies such an institution. Clearly if the Scots would not put their educational house in order themselves by developing the indigenous system to meet the needs of mid-Victorian Scotland, something new would be implemented by legislative intervention from above, and essentially from outside Scotland.

What angered Donaldson was that he believed there were features of the parochial system which were of such value in education as to justify their being carried forward and incorporated in any new system but which were ignored. Whereas the legislative provision before 1872 recognised the necessity of having a teacher appointed in every parish qualified to give more than merely elementary education to those of his pupils likely to benefit from higher branches and perhaps go on to University, the 1872 Act made no provision for teaching higher subjects. His anger was no less directed against the Act for failing to maintain the scholastic standard of teachers, which had been such a noticeable feature of the Scottish tradition, even in the poorest rural parishes. He was concerned that "there was not the slightest hint that the teachers were to train their pupils for life. They were simply to teach them reading, writing and arithmetic, or such similar subjects . . ."[1] This was to be a recurring theme in Donaldson's concept of education; it should be liberal and have a breadth which was something very different from the three Rs alone.

The primary purpose of the Act was to extend the availability of primary education to all children and Donaldson conceded that

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Paper, Box 13/6
James Donaldson, Home Rule and Scottish Education, p.6.

unquestionably the Act had been beneficial in that many districts for the first time had a proper supply of teachers. While he was prepared to give credit to the Act for achieving this "the real question for the community is not how many pupils there are at these schools, but how many of the pupils there are who receive an education which fits them to be honourable and upright men, good citizens and workers that benefit the State."[1]

That the quality of education provided after 1872 had been a casualty of the Act was a conviction which time would do nothing to modify. The grievance did have a basis in fact, for in the first decade after the implementation of the Act such was the increase in the number of children attending school that the authorities were fully extended in providing the basic grounding in the three Rs without having either the time or the means to do more. With abandonment of the concept of payment by results between 1885 and 1890, the Department demonstrated a more liberal policy but as late as 1912 Donaldson was asserting, "The Act of 1872 and subsequent Acts were primarily intended to extend the primary education to the entire community . . . but the question arose - had these children been properly taught so that they will become better citizens and have a love of goodness."[2]

Donaldson was unhesitating in holding the training of the new teachers responsible for this decline in the quality of education. The schools had endeavoured to meet the basic requirements during the early years but when this phase was past there were no longer

1. Ibid:

2. Dundee Courier, 10 September 1912. Donaldson was addressing the British Association which met in Dundee that year.

the teachers with the academic training which had so distinguished the parish teacher of former days, for the changed pattern of primary teacher training had produced a completely different type of teacher. The Scotch Education Department - it was not to become "Scottish" until 1918 - not only controlled the methods of teaching in the existing training colleges for teachers, but, equally stringently, what was taught. Donaldson had a clear idea of what a teacher should be but his definition and that of the Department were not mutually inclusive. "He is not a man who can merely instruct," Donaldson declared, "He is to educate. He is to try to produce self control in his pupils, he is to teach them to learn for themselves, he is to inspire them with love for their fellow-beings, and self denial manifesting that love to them. You must have men of wide culture, and you must have men of sound character."[1] His condemnation was unequivocal and as he invariably did, he compared the shortcomings of the system of teacher training in Scotland with that established in Germany; years after the legislation was enacted he remained convinced that "The Scotch Education Department had lost sight of the great principle which everywhere pervaded German, that a good education could be given only by good teachers and that the duty of those who controlled educational affairs was to see that teachers were thoroughly educated, had a delight in their work, were content with the arrangements made for them and were conscious that they were the benefactors of the community."[2] Donaldson believed that a teacher was responsible for the whole of the moral and intellectal training of the pupils in his charge; over

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Box 13/6, Home Rule and Scottish Education, p.20.
2. Ibid.

a period of thirty years he discerned a marked decline in the intellectual development of teachers, what he called "culture". He had many acquaintances among those who managed and lectured at Training Colleges and he had no hesitation in opining that "the universal opinion is that the education given is superficial and unsatisfactory, with too many subjects and no accurate grip of any of them . . . The course for training is for a majority a course of two years, where they get smatterings of varieties of subjects, . . . They cannot called highly educated or specially fit for work."[1]

As has already been observed, prior to the Act many of the parish teachers had at least some University education, many having trained for the ministry. These were progressively replaced by the teachers issuing from the Training Colleges until by the end of the century those with the advantage of some University education in addition to the training of the Colleges were in the minority. Those who had a degree tended not to stay in primary teaching because of the low salary and lack of security but one of the most conspicuous developments during this period was the number of women training as primary teachers. In 1851 women had accounted for 35% of all teachers in Scotland, by 1911 this figure had risen to 70%.[2] To many women teaching was not viewed as a lifetime vocation but as an employment until marriage and as a result there was a much greater turnover of teaching staff

1. James Donaldson, Home Rule and Scottish Education, p.21-22.
2. Helen Corr, "The Sexual Division of Labour in the Scottish Teaching Profession, 1872-1914", in Scottish Culture and Scottish Education, 1800-1980", W.M. Humes and H.M. Paterson, (Edin., 1983), p.137.

than there had ever been in the past, which Donaldson deplored as bad for sound education.[1] All these factors contributed to a relentless diminution in the respect and dignity which formerly had attached to the teacher in a parish school.

The effect of the Act on the quality of teachers and the standard of education which they provided was to be an enduring grievance for Donaldson but his anger and indignation were directed towards the Scotch Education Department for he saw the origin of all the problems in the composition and operation of the Department. This had no connection with the country whose education it controlled so totally; being appointed by the Government of the day there was no pretence of the membership being in any degree representative. It was composed wholly of Privy Councillors but in practice the work was left to the Secretary and Permanent Officials. Donaldson's indignation was particularly incensed by the fact that, "the peculiar feature of this body is that it almost never meets. It is said to have met on some occasions, but this means little, for no quorum is fixed. It is believed that no minutes of the meetings existed or exist, and altogether its doings whatever they may be are kept in profound secrecy."[2]

1. When it suited him, Donaldson could find admirable features in the training of women teachers; in 1909 he believed that "the education required for the primary school is to an eminent degree suitable for most women students. It is excellent for the special purpose for which it is provided, and it is excellent for the good management of a house ad the training of children, and therefore it is an admirable preparation for marriage and domestic life." Predating widespread feminism, this presupposes that a woman's ultimate career is that of homemaker, wife and mother. James Donaldson, University Addresses, (Edin., 1911) p. 614. Address 6 October 1909.

1. Dundee Courier, 10 September 1912.

The Permanent Secretary could not be a Member of Parliament, he could not initiate legislation and although the Government invariably appointed someone of its own party he did not resign when the Government resigned so that there were occasions when the Permanent Secretary was working under a Secretary whose political ideas differed from his own. "Nothing but delay could arise out of this state of matters . . . The Permanent Officials have been men with a deep interest in education, but they were placed in a singularly difficult position."[1] To overcome the difficulties inherent in these circumstances - both for the Scottish Secretary and the Permanent Officials - resort was had to preparing Orders which had the "power of Parliamentary Acts although never discussed by Parliament or the public." To Donaldson this mode of legislating was reprehensible, affording no adequate opportunities for discussion and debate nor for different interests to have their views considered; this, he declared was "arbitrary power" and because the Code changed every year - "sometimes the alterations have been very great" - a constant uncertainty was created.

It is noticeable that Donaldson's condemnation of these aspects of the Act were more frequently expressed with the passage of time, especially after the turn of the century when he would harness these grievances to the cause of Scottish Home Rule. In 1872 he had been disappointed that so much of Moncrieff's Bill - to which we may surmise, he had contributed - had been jettisoned but the Education (Scotland)

1. St. Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Home Rule and Scottish Education
George Otto Trevelyan when Secretary of State for Scotland, wrote to Donaldson "I am becoming very fond of my work although the conditions under which it is carried on, with a scattered staff partly in Edinburgh and partly in London, make it somewhat difficult to keep the threads together."
St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, M 7846, letter from Sir George Otto Trevelyan, 27 September 1892.

Act was now a fact and its provisions, whether Donaldson liked them or not, were to be implemented. Donaldson accepted that he had to make the best of the situation and to this end he directed his energies towards achieving changes through deputations and submissions to politicians and civil servants. In the years immediately following the Act his criticisms were not articulated in the terms of forthright and unqualified condemnation which became such a feature of his later speeches and writings, by which time he was not only completely disillusioned about securing change through deputations and an Education Department in London but also the long term consequences in the change in teacher training and the narrow interpretation of education had become apparent. Unlike their English counterparts, School Boards in Scotland were not legally restricted to the provision of elementary education; Section 67 of the Act providing "that due care shall be taken by the Scotch Education Department . . . that the standard of education which now exists in the public schools shall not be lowered, and that, as far as possible, as high a standard shall be maintained in all schools." However generously this provision might be construed, the provision of education beyond the elementary was effectively precluded by the strict interpretation of the laissez faire principles of Liberal orthodoxy. When introducing the Bill in Parliament in 1872, Lord Advocate Young had expressly stated that "It was not generally in accordance with the views of the House to grant imperial money or to authorise local taxation in order to provide for the higher class of education, and it could therefore be provided for only otherwise than pecuniarly in the Bill."

The Argyll Commission had put forward a recommendation which in many ways was to prove the most far reaching in its consequences for secondary education. This concerned the endowed hospitals. The Commission had not examined these but circularized them for information and concluded that, although they provided a satisfactory education, the cost was disproportionately high. The Commission suggested that the endowments might be put to better use by converting these residential institutions into day schools charging moderate fees. To a considerable extent Victorian philanthropy had tended to make these institutions out of step with current social changes and moreover their conversion to day schools would meet a real need, since working class parents in urban areas had greater difficulty in finding good education for their children than those in many rural districts.

At the same time as the Argyll Commission was expressing an opinion on the endowed hospitals, the Taunton Commission in England was examining the endowed grammar schools. The work of this Commission culminated in the Endowed Schools Act of 1869 which allowed certain changes in the statutes governing school foundations in England. Donaldson was well aware of the large sums involved in the endowments of the charitable hospitals in Edinburgh and indeed it is evident that he viewed them somewhat covetously, for the High School enjoyed no substantial endowments and he often made reference in his Annual Reports that not a single alumnus had left "a farthing" in endowment to the School. At the meeting with Mountstuart Duff, MP in John Burnett's Hotel in November 1868 - the year before the Endowed Schools Act was passed

for England - Donaldson "made a delicate allusion . . . to the enormous revenues of the Edinburgh Hospitals, and a question was thrown out as to the appropriateness of these funds for purposes of general education."[1] Duff did not believe that the legislature could directly interefere in the alienation of endowments but that internal reform might benefit the burgh schools by the "inmates of the hospitals being transferred to them."[2]

In July of the year following this meeting, 1869, and only a few months after the English Act, the Endowed Institutions (Scotland) Act was passed. Under this Act the governing bodies of endowed institutions might submit to the Home Office, for approval, their proposals for altering the terms of their foundation to increase their educational usefulness. The initiative, however, could only come from the institution. Daniel Stewarts and the Merchant Maiden Hospital received approval for conversion into fee paying day schools. In the case of James Gillespie's Hospital the funds of the free school and the Hospital were united to provide a larger and better equipped elementary school while George Watson's Hospital was converted into a double collegiate school for both sexes. Part of the proposal put forward by George Watson's and approved was that the older boys no longer be taught in the Hospital but should be sent to the public school of the city - The Royal High School. Since the children in these Hospitals received their education from a charitable endowment, several of the class conscious parents of pupils at the High School did not look favourably on the suggestion that children from George Watson's should be sent

1. RHS: Minutes, meeting 24 November 1868.
2. Ibid.

there. Obviously, their real objection was that they considered this would be detrimental to maintaining that "tone" which was a valued part of an education at the School. "As far as the admission of the boys (from George Watson's) was concerned," Donaldson explained to parents, "it seems to me that we had no alternative, even if we had wished it. The High School is a public school, and recognizes no distinction of classes."[1] What is unclear is whether Donaldson himself wanted the Hospital boys foisted on his School. He had, as he said, no alternative but it may be questioned whether he had any real enthusiasm for increasing the enrolment from this source, especially since their arrival resulted in a number of parents removing their sons from the Royal High School. Donaldson was fully conscious of the social connotations of the School and to assert that it recognized no distinction of class was much closer to theory than fact - the fees saw to that.

Thus in 1870 these residential Hospitals were converted into large fee paying schools and although a relatively small number of foundationers were preserved they, like the other pupils, all lived out. There was however an important exception. George Heriot's was the oldest Hospital in Edinburgh, having been founded by the will of the jeweller to James I and VI and modelled on Christ's Hospital in London. Unlike George Watson's and the Merchant Maidens which had been intended for the benefit of the merchant class and generally drew on middle class families who had known more affluent days, Heriot's

1. RHS: Rector's Report, 1868-69.
   The full fee was paid for each boy by the Hospital.
2. RHS: Rector's Report, 1870-71.

concerned itself with boys from the working classes with a decided preference for orphans.

Although it was not until 1885 that Heriot's was reorganised like the other Hospitals and became a day school, Donaldson's involvement with Heriot's during the intervening years was to have important repercussions on the direction of his life. While the Town Council had turned over the management of the High School to the newly created School Board in 1872, it remained a considerable force in education in the city since the Governors of Heriot's were the Town Council and Ministers of Edinburgh. To add to the already considerable difficulties inherent in restructuring a foundation of the early seventeenth century in a manner appropriate to the needs of the latter half of the nineteenth century "the affairs of Heriot's became entangled with the city's notoriously quarrelsome municipal politics."[1]

The Governors of Heriot's did consider reform since they were conscious that if they themselves did not propose changes which met with Government approval, the latter would ultimately take the matter into its own hands. Apart from the fact that the Hospital system was increasingly criticized for its 'monastic' aspect and poor educational record, it also attracted attention because the Hospitals were enjoying greatly increasing wealth, in excess of the sums necessary to satisfy the purpose of their foundations. In this regard, Heriot's[2]

1. R.D. Anderson, Education and Opportunity in Victorian Scotland (Oxf., 1983), p.175.
2. The income from the Heriot Trust had quadrupled in the first seventy years of the century, from £4,389 in 1800 to £18,546 in 1871.
   Ibid: p.177.

was singularly fortunate since, by historical accident, it was the superior of most of the land on which Edinburgh's New Town had been built. To the Governor's credit, the Heriot funds had been used to provide free elementary schools in the city - by 1868 there were thirteen of these establishments - but with the Act of 1872 these schools, which were both popular and efficient, were in an anomalous position; they remained outside the authority of the School Board and free, which was so widely disapproved of. The Heriot Governors had in 1868, as a concession to the spirit of the time, changed 60 of the 180 foundationers into day boys but this amounted to little more than a token gesture since there were no changes to the actual running of the establishment or the nature of the education provided. On three separate occasions Heriot's put forward proposals for reform, all of which were rejected as being outside the purposes of the foundation. The rejection of Heriot's proposals in 1870 effectively reduced the 1869 Act to a dead letter.

Following the inadequate Educational Endowments Act of 1869 - and with a political eye to disarming criticism of the 1872 Education Act - little more than a month after enacting the latter the Government established another Royal Commission to consider all endowments in Scotland. The Chairman was a Lanarkshire landowner , Sir Thomas Colebrooke, Bt but the Commission had no executive powers. Notwithstanding, in its Report which appeared in 1875 it suggested principles for reforming the endowed hospitals, particularly that money from endowments should not be used where there was other legal provision but rather for such means of discharging the community's obligations to the poor in the way of education as competitive scholarships.

The sympathy of the Commission for a general programme of secondary education gave rise to the Association for Promoting Secondary Education in Scotland which included such foremost educational reformers as Moncrieff, Inglis,[1] Playfair, Principal Grant, Lorimer, Sellar, Duff Grant and Donaldson who had been involved with all the former for several years. The aim of the Association was the establishment of Secondary Schools which would have a recognized place between the parish schools and the Universities: it was disbanded in 1878 when Parliament that year established another endowments commission. This differed from it predecessor in that it could itself authorize reform schemes proposed by the endowed bodies themselves but it had no power to initiate reforms. Lord Moncrieff was appointed Chairman and Donaldson a Commissioner; it was a high mark of regard for his knowledge of educational matters that the Tory Government appointed Donaldson whose Liberal sympathies were well known.

Yet, despite the good intentions of the legislature, it had to be acknowledged that "in the reform of endowments, which was so vital to the financially starved system of secondary education, the Moncrieff Commission achieved comparatively little."[2] This did not reflect on the enthusiasm or efforts of the Commissioners but was a direct consequence of the permissive nature of the Act; without the power to take the initiative the effectiveness of the Commission was severely limited. Altogether the Commission received 32 petitions for altering

1. John Inglis (1810-91). Lord Advocate in Lord Derby's Tory Governments in 1852 and 1858, the only important legislation associated with his name is the Universities (Scotland) Act of 1858. In 1867 he became President of the Court of Session with the title Lord Glencorse.
2. H.M. Knox, Two Hundred and Fifty Years of Scottish Education (Edin. & Lond., 1963), p.121.

the government and administration of endowed institutions of which it approved 28. A consideration of the revenues, however, clearly shows how inadequate the endowments of these institutions were in providing secondary education for any but a small proportion of the population - the total revenue of the 32 institutions which petitioned the Moncrieff Commission amounted to only £38,340 but the revenues of the 28 whose petitions were granted accounted for less than half the total, £16,552.

One of the petitions before the Commissions was that put forward by Heriot's. The relations between those bent on reforming the hospitals and the Heritors, the governors of Heriot's, had progressively deteriorated. Duncan McLaren[1], the veteran radical and member of the Council, wrote of this time that Donaldson's "views it was well known were hostile to the design of the Heriot Governors" and that the Commission "offered little prospect of reconciliation with the defenders of the Heriot Trust; and indeed its issue was generally regarded as a renewed declaration of war on the part of the Education Department at the bidding of the spoilers of the heritage of the poor."[2] In McLaren Donaldson made an obdurate and implacable enemy. For it was none other than McLaren himself who had been the force behind establishing the Heriot Free Schools - the first had opened its doors as long ago as 1836 - funded from the surplus funds of the trust and, in his long public career, this was the achievement on which he took the greatest pride. The

1. Duncan McLaren (1800-1886) had become a member of Edinburgh Town Council in 1833, being progressively, baillie, Treasurer and Provost (1851-54). He had been Liberal MP for the city between 1865 and 1871 "acquiring in the House of Commons a position of so much authority on Scottish questions that he used to be called "the member for Scotland".
   D.N.B., Vol. XXXV, p.194..

2. J.B. Mackie, The Life and Work of Duncan McLaren, (Edin., 1883), Vol. II, p.193.

Heriot Free Schools were his child and now the funds on which the existence of the schools depended were threatened with appropriation and redeployment by the reformers. The Heritors with McLaren in the van, saw Donaldson as particularly conspicuous among the spoilers for not only did he have a high profile in the education scene in Edinburgh but they feared that Heriot's endowment would be diverted to benefit the middle class and not the poor for whom they maintained it was intended. On the defensive and suspicious of the motives of the reformers, it was not surprising that the Heritors readily persuaded themselves that Donaldson coveted part of the endowment of the High School and in this lay the origins of much of the bitterness which poisoned their relations with him. Their fears in this direction were not wholly without foundation; as a Commissioner, Donaldson was on the inside for learning of the reform proposals submitted to the Commission from those institutions which sought to take advantage of the Act and the attitude of the Commissioners towards these. Thus in April 1879, he was able to inform the masters at the High Schol that the Commissioners "were of opinion that Heriot's money was left or the benefit of the middle classes and suggested that it might be advisable to put in a claim on behalf of the High School."[1] A petition was quickly prepared setting out the claim of the High school on the Heriot Funds and the following month the Masters' Meeting authorized one of their number to appear before the Commission to give evidence supporting the School's Statement and Petition.[2]

1. RHS: Minutes, Meeting 17 April, 1879.
2. Ibid: Meeting, 27 May, 1879. The High School eventually benefitted from the Heriot Endowment but not until 1885, after the Heriot Free schools had been brought under the School Board the previous year.

This Petition was of course identified with Donaldson and to the Heritors must have appeared as evidence of his rapacious designs on the Hospital's funds. In the end, however, the Petition proved premature for the Heriot Scheme, although more radical in its proposals than that of 1870, was among those rejected on the gounds that "it offended against orthodoxy by refusing to abandon the hospital system, by failing to divert funds to university bursaries, and above all by glorying in the principle of free education."[1]

In approving 28 petitions, the Moncrieff Commission did not have a lot to show for three years' work and it was at last recognized to what extent it had been handicapped by being unable to take the initiative. In response to this realisation, when the next Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act was passed in 1882 it established an executive commission with extensive powers to completely reorganize all endowments which predated the 1872 Education Act by taking the initiative in preparing schemes for their better administration and usefulness. This Commission, under the chairmanship of Lord Balfour of Burleigh demonstrated what it could achieve with these powers compared with the Moncrieff Commission by approving over the following seven years 379 schemes involving some 821 separate endowments.[2]

It has been convenient to follow the work of the Moncrieff Commission in relation to the unlocking and redirecting of endowed funds with the work of the Balfour Commission which, due to its significantly greater powers, was enabled to achieve very much more in this area.

1. R.D. Anderson, Education and Opportunity in Victorian Scotland, (Oxf., 1983), p.184.
2. Many small endowments in the same area were combined.

It is now appropriate to return to the Moncrieff Commission for, in addition to its work reforming endowed hospitals, the Commission was also entrusted with another important and distinct function. Partly as a consequence of the Board of Education which had been established by the 1872 Education Act having been allowed to lapse, the Commission was directed to make a special report on the state of higher education in Scotland. Although it is not possible to ascribe to Donaldson conclusively specific parts of the report, the views which he personally expressed on education are so remarkably parallel to the Commissioners' Report that his influence and substantial contribution to the Report are clearly discernible. Indeed, as an exercise in comparative stylistic appreciation, Donaldson's hand is evident:

> "The question" the Commission noted in its Report, "submitted for our consideration we take to be - In what way is this standard of education, so long maintained by the law and practice of Scotland, to be maintained, consistently with the due training of every child in the country in the elementary branches? We are of opinion that it is not only possible to combine thorough elementary education with instruction in the high branches, but that any separation of these subjects is detrimental to the tone of the school, and dispiriting to the master. It seems to us that although it may be desirable to establish secondary schools in certain populous centres for the further advancement of children who have shown their ability at the ordinary public schools, it is not possible to establish any such means of education for the great majority of children attending the public schools in the districts to which our inquiry has special reference." 1.

Substituting the first person plural for the singular, this is only a variation in expression of Donaldson's address to the second Annual Educational Congress held in Glasgow in the last week of 1875 when he told the assembly that he "sincerely hoped that the time would

1. Commission on Endowed Institutions in Scotland, 1st Report, 1879, pp.x.

never come when the teachers (of parish schools) would not be able to teach the higher branches."[1] The Commission essentially endorsed the parish school tradition[2] but in addressing itself to the efficiency of the teachers, it submitted a number of important recommendations which were a statement of the principles of teacher training which Donaldson articulated all his life:

> "It is obvious" the Report stated, "that without a supply of efficient and well trained teachers any regulations as to the matter of teaching of the subjects to be taught can do very little. . . . the first object of the Department ought to be to elevate the standard of the attainments of all those who are coming forward as teachers. "Do what you will in building or endowing or encouraging a school, make for it the most convenient premises, place it in the most favourable situation, give it every advantage of government, wealth, or patronage - but after all the teacher is the pivot on which success of failure turns.""3.

Thus the Commission emphasised in it corporate identify, what Donaldson had as an individual, that great care should be taken in the selection of fully qualified and efficient teachers in towns. It pointed out that the selection of teachers justified even greater care in rural areas where the population was thinly scattered and "the influences of public opinion has but small effect on the action of the individual parent in directing the education of the child." The Commission saw the character of the teacher not only of importance in the context of instructing the children but also in advising parents of a promising child about the course of study from which the child

1. Educational News, 1 January 1876.
2. Commission on Endowed Institutions in Scotland, 1st Report 1879, p. xv.
3. ibid: p.xvi.

would most benefit. This reflected a feature of the parish schools, that in theory at least the educational system should enable the lad o' pairts to fulfil his scholastic potential, "In such cases the influence of a teacher of high attainments would be widely felt . . . the appointment of at least one such teacher in every parish seems essentially required in order to secure that the higher branches of learning may continue within the reach of those children of talent from all classes of the population who may be likely to desire to profit from such instruction."[1]

The Commission went further with regard to rural areas for it believed that if the Parliamentary Grant was to encourage higher education in these parishes, generally covering a wide and thinly populated area where consequently the number of children who would take the higher subjects would be few, it was impossible to find adequate remuneration for an efficient trained teacher from the sums which could possible be earned from individual passes. So it recommended that the Department should give recognition to this situation by providing a grant of £15 or £20 a year to any teacher who efficiently taught a class, however small, in the specific subjects.[2]

Another aspect of the Report which bears unmistakable signs of Donaldson's mark concerned the importance it believed attached to University education for widening the intellectual experience and awareness of teachers:

1. Ibid: p.xvi.
2. Ibid.

"Any encouragement that the Department can offer, or can induce school boards to offer so as to attract graduates, or to encourage teachers to pass some time at an university, will, in our opinion, be the most valuable and efficient means of advancing the standard of higher education in Scotland. 1

To achieve this end, the Commission urged that the training and instruction of pupil teachers should be raised and that the basis of their subsequent education be widened; specifically it recommended that teachers who attended a University for two years of their course and sufficiently distinguished themselves in the examinations should be encouraged by means of scholarships and allowances to continue at the University and to graduate.

The recommendations of the Commission were a forceful expression of Donaldson's ideas. They endorsed the value of the traditional parochial system of education while recognising those features peculiar to country areas which resulted in few children having the oppportunity of higher subjects and provided constructive ideas as to how these could be brought within the reach of rural children who might benefit from them.

1. Ibid.

# CHAPTER 7.

Although during the late eighteen sixties and throughout the eighteen seventies Donaldson was devoting much of his time and energy to the problems of school education he had not ceased to maintain his keen interest in Universities. His appointment in 1861 as an Extra Professorial Examiner had given him a legitimate foothold within Edinburgh University, enabled him to maintain his close association with Blackie and, with the wide acclaim accorded the Apostolic Fathers, it must have seemed only a matter of time before he was appointed to a chair. Enthusiastic, well qualified and highly regarded in the academic world he was nevertheless to wait over twenty years after his appointment as an Examiner before he found a chair. Initially this appears surprising but the reasons are not hard to find in the circumstances of the period.

Firstly, an important factor was the very small number of chairs in Victorian Universities and consequently they attracted keen competition. For those like Donaldson who had a Scottish education, there was another problem which tended to militate against their appointment - there was often a preference for applicants from the English Universities, namely Oxford and Cambridge.[1] This prejudice was so widely recognised that when in 1875 Donaldson applied for the Greek Chair at Glasgow,

a reference expresssed the hope that those making the appointment would not make the mistake of comparing Donaldson's qualifications with "merits belonging essentially to an earlier stage: I mean in a word, such merits as are attested by brilliant honours at one of the English Universities."[1]

There was yet a third factor which could be decisive and was independent of the merits of the applicants or the bias in favour of English Universities. This was the factions and alignments which invariably existed, their importance being the greater for the smallness of the academic world. These could be responsible for other than the best candidate being appointed as the Principal of Glasgow University, John Caird, acknowledged to Donaldson in connection with the latter's candidature for the Classics Chair there. "The University Court is composed of elements extremely divergent from each other" Caird explained to Donaldson (who had been conversant with the import of University politics since he had been a student sitting at Blackie's feet in Aberdeen), "it might be necessary for some of us to withdraw our best candidate to support a less desirable man in order to keep out an undesirable one."[2] It is not possible to assess what weight was given these factors in deciding the Glasgow appointment and the question need not detain us. But again, as when he applied for the Latin Chair at London twelve years earlier, Donaldson failed to be appointed.

Despite these disappointments and being confronted with what might prove a lengthy wait until another Chair fell vacant - since Professors

1. His appointment to a Chair at Aberdeen in 1882 was considered something of a break through. "It was felt" a fellow master at the High School wrote "that a stimulus had been given to the ambition of Scottish scholars, and that henceforth the Classical chairs in the national Universities were no longer to be regarded as accessible only to those who had been privileged to study at Oxford or Cambridge".
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6126, letter from Principal Caird, 3 June 1875.

were appointed for life and generally died in office it was impossible to predict when vacancies would occur - Donaldson remained actively involved in University affairs and the following year, 1876, his influence and knowledge of education was recgnized when he was invited to give evidence before a Royal Commission established to consider University reform. This Commission of 1876 largely covered the same ground as its predecessor in 1836. However by 1876 there was an important difference for by now the "anglicising party" was in the ascendant. The ever swelling numbers in the professions and commerce - the emergent middle class - were increasingly concerned with securing for their sons the education which would afford them access to the best career opportunities. It was England that readily provided the models for change; it was the closest source for comparison, demonstrating a system which commanded a prestige both in its public schools and Universities unknown to those in Scotland. The party demanding change sought an accommodation of English features essentially because of the advantages which would accrue from their assimilation.

The Commission afforded Donaldson the opportunity of voicing his progressive ideas on changes which he was convinced should be introduced in the Universities. Indeed his recommendations appeared positively radical to the Commissioners; he had no hesitation in frankly acknowledging them to be so for he was certain,

". . . that the University should undertake the work of stimulating and superintending original research and no other work, and that the rest of the boy's education should issue from the school with a thorough hold of the materials and means by which he could cultivate himself, and should not issue from the school till he has a firm grasp of these." 1

1. Royal Commission on the Universities of Scotland, Report Vol. II, 1878, p.753.

He urged that boys should remain at school until they were eighteen[1] and that the four year University courses should be correspondingly shortened. The special relationship which had always existed between the parish schools and the Universities meant that inescapably changes to the one affected the other. As Donaldson, in common with other University reformers, was well aware, German educationalists regarded the Scottish universities as academically no more than schools during the first years of study. Since a number of students progressed to University direct from a parish school in areas where there was no provision for secondary education - an important demonstration that the Scottish idea of equality of opportunity in education was not confined to theory but never at any time did such students amount to more than a very small proportion of the total - and since there was no form of entrance examination, the junior classes at the Universities were a necessity to enable such students to raise their standard.

In addition to raising the entrance age for the universities Donaldson urged that the latter move away from the traditional curriculum which was both fixed and limited. His original idea was that students be asked to have only two or three primary subjects, in effect a foundation year - not surprisingly he recommended psychology and

1. At the High School at this time boys stayed until they were seventeen but this was exceptional: generally schools had few pupils over fifteen and most almost none.

physiology[1] - after which a student should have a wide freedom of choice and "perfect liberty to select what subjects he deemed most suitable for him; then when the time comes up for examination, he will be asked in what subjects he studied, and the examiners would examine him accordingly."[2] No more radical change to the time hallowed curriculum, could have been proposed.

As was so characteristic of him when he proposed changes, he had also given thought as to how they could be effectively implemented. Donaldson realised that it would be to the advantage of school masters, Professors and students if there were some means of correlating the teaching at Schools and Universities and he tried to achieve this with regard to the High School by having the examinations there conducted by the Professors from the University. To this end, in 1873 he had sought the co-operation of the Principal of Edinburgh University, Sir Alexander Grant,[3] whose reply set out the difficulties Donaldson encountered. "You see that in the first place" Grant pointed out, "the question is whether the arts Professors are willing or would think it their duty to sacrifice what has been hitherto their most cherished privilege

1. Donaldson later explained the reason for the importance he attached to physiology and psychology. "My own opinion is that all education should end with a study of ourselves - that every cultivated man should be made acquainted with the laws that regulate his body, his soul, the society in which he lives, and the country to which he belongs; and that, therefore, means should be provided for the study of Physiology, with the laws of health, Psychology, Sociology in its widest sense, and the history, constitution, and laws of his country."
James Donaldson, University Addresses, (Edin., 1911) p.11.

2. Royal Commission on the Universities of Scotland, Report Vol. II, 1878, p.753.

3. Sir Alexander Grant of Dalney, 10th Bt (1826-1887). A Scholar of Balliol College, Oxford and a Fellow of Oriel he was Vice Chancellor of Bombay University when in 1868 appointed Principal of Edinburgh University. In 1859 he married Susan Ferrier, the daughter of James Ferrier, Professor of Moral Philosophy and Political Economy in St Andrews University.

- the power of making long summer tours in the summer - in order to conduct the examination of the High School."[1] The difficulties, Grant believed, would be aggravated, if several other schools were converted to Donaldson's campaign on this front and similarly applied to the University for examiners. Grant's most crushing argument against the request was a serious indictment of the Universities, which were he stressed, "so undermanned in their staff of available scholars of repute, that they are hardly in a position to perform it."[2] Confronted with this situation Donaldson had been thwarted in putting his idea into practice at the High School and the Commissioners wondered how, if the Universities introduced a set - and higher - standard for entry, the schools would be able to come up to the new level demanded for University entrance. To Donaldson this problem was largely imaginary for he was confident that if the Universities raised their standard, the schools, given time, would raise the level of their instruction to meet that standard.

While Donaldson never advocated that an age limit should be imposed, he did believe that some form of entrance examination was necessary. The whole question of emancipation of the traditional curriculum was inextricably tied to that of an entrance exam since if the students were now to be offered a greater choice of subjects it would be necessary to ensure a base level of education in certain subjects before the degree course itself was begun. There was consensus among the Universities that some sort of entrance exam was desirable but there was also a

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 7512, letter from Sir Alexander Grant, 24 June 1873.
2. Ibid.

strong body of opposition to any form of assessment which would effectively place a barrier on entry to the Universities, founded on the belief "that the Universities are public institutions, and that we have no right to exclude any person who thinks he is able to profit by our institution"[1] Others held that the national character of the Scottish Universities precluded them unilaterally making any such decision, arguing that "it is part of the fundamental constitution or theory of a University, that the instruction given is open to all; or to put it otherwise, that such is the understanding between the nation and the Universities, from which it is not open to the Universities to depart without the national consent."[2] In the face of such opposition Donaldson advocated that an exam be instituted at the school level and that on achieving this certificate a student would enter the University for an MA degree course structured to cover two years. Although held in the schools, the exam would have University representation and a Supreme Council of Universities, which he recommended establishing, would also be involved. Again Donaldson was ahead of his time for what he was describing was a central body entrusted with controlling admission to the Universities and setting standards both for admission and for University degree exams themselves.

Donaldson had been aware since his early years as a Classical Examiner that there was a need for some body empowered to deal with matters of concern to the four Universities and which would also be able to coordinate such questions as examination standards.[3] He

1. Commission on Endowed Institutions in Scotland, Evidence, Part I, 1879, p.790.
2. Ibid.
3. As Classical Examiner Donaldson regretted that there was no effective means of determining a uniform standard for University exams. He discovered that the standard he set for honours was considerably above that of Aberdeen; consequently many more graduates of the latter were dignified with the reputation of having passed with honours than the comparative few in Edinburgh.

proposed that this be called a General Council of Education or a Supreme Council, and that it "should have the control to some extent of all the forms of education, and make University, secondary, and primary education all harmonize."[1] While strongly believing that the individual character of each of the Universities should be preserved, he urged that such a Council have the power to enforce any arrangement which it believed to be advantageous to the Universities as a whole.

If the curriculum of the Universities was to be widened, it was essential that new chairs be established and Donaldson lent his voice to the demands for such an increase in staff but in view of the almost endemic jealousies and squabbles between professors over demarcations between subjects, his concept of what a professor might teach must have appeared startlingly liberal. He believed that "professors are not to be strictly confined to teaching one particular branch, but can take up any subject of investigation in their own department under certain restrictions."[2] Not only did he support the demand for an increased number of chairs but also pressed for the appointment of lecturers as a first step in creating a properly organised career structure for University teachers.[3]

The Commission also investigated the matter of bursaries. Donaldson strongly favoured bursaries being awarded by competition while allowing that a donor wishing to establish a bursary under special conditions should not be prevented from doing so. If, as he recommended, all

1. Royal Commission on the Universities of Scotland, Report, Vol. II, 1878, p.752.
2. Ibid: p.759.
3. Ibid: p.760. This was a logical extension of his recommendation to the Argyll Commission more than a decade earlier that there should be a career structure for teachers.

bursaries were awarded by competition, one of the weaknesses of some bursaries of which he had experience would avoided, for,

"Some students got bursaries who would have been far better without them; and these were a temptation for men to go to the University who should have been left where they had originally been . . . (at) the plough or wherever it might be. It is a sad spectacle to see a man working on at the University, attending and attending, and never making anything of it." 1

In this context the value he attached to some form of entrance exam was apparent; he considered it "important that the Universities should say "You are not fit to come here" if such were the case for the man's best interests."[2]

Donaldson's evidence reveals him to have been a "free thinker" in the development of his ideas concerning Universities; he did not want change for the sake of change any more than he would maintain traditional features because they were part of Scotland's educational heritage. His proposals for change were grounded in his own experience as Rector at the High School and as an Examiner at Edinburgh University, and from such practical involvement he recognised where changes should be made and thought the difficulties through to formulating how Universities might be improved. In time all the changes which Donaldson sought - raising the school leaving age, liberating the curriculum, an entrance exam, a career structure for University teachers and co-ordinating of standards - came to pass but it seems that the Commissioners brought to their task prosaic and unimaginative minds less capable of the totally independent and objective assessment and foresight

1. Ibid: p.760.
2. Ibid: p.761.

which Donaldson exhibited. This difference in outlook is apparent in some of his answers to the Chairman, Lord Moncrieff. For example this exchange following Donaldson's recommendation that the university entrance standard be raised:

Lord Moncrieff — Yes, if the only object were to make the most perfect scholar, I do not doubt but that idea would do quite well; but there are many other things to be considered are there not?

Donaldson — Yes; but I look not only at what would be the most perfect scholar, but also the most perfect man

and again,

Lord Moncrieff — But must not that be in relation to the existing social conditions?

Donaldson — Yes; but I am talking of the proposal irrespective of these conditions. 1

If responses such as these suggested to the Commissioners that Donaldson's was an idealized vision of Universities, the intimate knowledge he revealed of all levels of education and the practical experience on which he founded his arguments, dispelled any such ideas.

In the end the Commission of 1876 had to choose between the two divergent systems - either to preserve the independence and distinct features of the traditional Scottish system or to agree to the assimilation of that of England. The Commissioners, hardly surprisingly, came down decidedly for the latter, recommending that the peculiarly Scottish feature of the curriculum, such as compulsory philosophy, be ended and the entire degree course reorganised on English lines; the general approach would yield to the specialist one and science be accorded an equality with arts. The response in Scotland to the recommendations

1. Royal Commission on Universities of Scotland, Report, Vol. II, 1878, p.775.

of the Royal Commission in 1826 was now repeated; the changes recommended were as drastic as they were necessary but like Donaldson's proposals, they were too premature to command wide acceptance and support. As on that earlier occasion, there was to be no immediate legislative action but in the hiatus of the succeeding fifteen years there was to be a growing recognition that change was inevitable.

Donaldson had maintained his involvement with the EIS and afforded the Institute valuable advice and information on the thinking of Government Commissions and Committees on a wide range of topics relating to education. The Institute had for a number of years considered having its own publication but it seems likely that lack of finance had prevented this aspiration being realised. Eventually in 1874 the EIS appointed a Committee to consider the matter and accepted its recommendation that the best way of achieving this would be by establishing a limited liability company. All the shareholders were teachers and although, initially, it was not the official organ of the EIS, it shared the offices of the Institute at 10A St Andrews St and as the years passed shares were either donated or purchased until the Institute held the majority and controlled the policy. In practice, the Educational News expressed the policy of the EIS from its inception.

Donaldson was the first Editor but although - on paper - there was an adequate share capital and a handsome editorial salary "the cold douche of experience soon came to moderate these glowing expectations . . . The great expectations faded away, and as they faded the first to suffer financial disappointment was, of course, the Editor."[1]

1. Educational News, 13 December 1902.

Whether or not Donaldson received any remuneration is not recorded but it seems unlikely; certainly when his successor assumed the Editorship two and a half years later there was no provision for any salary and the position was described at that time in the minutes as gratuitous.[1]

In the first edition, which appeared on 1 January 1876, Donaldson set out clearly what the policy of the paper would be. "What is its aim?" he asked, "The same as that of the Educational Institute. It is to work towards forming the mass of teachers into a well organised body, animated by high ideals . . . its aim is to help in elevating the profession."[2] The aims of the EIS had not changed since 1847 but the internal dissensions had handicapped its work. Donaldson recognised this when he elaborated on how the policy of the EIS would be effected through the News:

> "The profession will be elevated . . . when the members of it, feeling the deep importance of their vocation, endeavour to infuse sweetness, charity, and truth with the national life. We elevate our profession most when, in an unselfish spirit, we strive to use the tremendous influence which lies at our disposal to confer true and lasting benefit on the nation . . . we shall bring before our readers all such information as shall tend to make the bonds of brotherhood closer, smooth down the asperities which have unfortunately too often occurred in the past, and send us to our work with a cheerful and more hopeful spirit." 3

Reports of interesting meetings, biographies of famous teachers, reviews of book dealing with methods of instruction and organisation of schools, as well as of actual school text books were to be included.

1. Minutes of Meeting of Directors, 8 June 1878.
2. Educational News, 1 January 1876.
3. Ibid.

When the News first appeared the EIS had a membership which had just topped two thousand. There were, Donaldson told his readers, 6719 teachers in elementary schools under School Boards and this number was equalled by the number in higher class schools, private schools and Universities. "The teaching profession" he concluded, "is thus the largest body dealing with the spiritual interests of the country".[1] He gave an assurance that the News was bound to no party or publisher and was determined to show no partiality to any section of teachers.

Donaldson wrote a leader every week on such topics as The Code, Museums and their Educational Uses, Culture of Teachers, Physical science in Schools and on aspects of the effects of the 1872 Act as well as comment on Government education policy. As early as his second leader, on 8 January, entitled The Education Act, teachers were being exhorted to action; "Let teachers then exert themselves. At the very next meeting of every local branch (of the EIS) deputations should be appointed to wait on Members of Parliament."

Donaldson had called in the first issue for a "more hopeful spirit" and this was needed almost immediately when the paper ran quickly into distressing financial straits. The capital of the company was soon found to be totally inadequate for it rapidly disappeared and the bank was called on for an overdaft to which the Directors, including Donaldson, gave their personal guarantees. They demonstrated great courage and confidence in the future, for their professional brethren's support for the News had proved disappointing. Happily, the Directors' confidence was not misplaced for the financial position slowly improved.

1. Ibid.

In 1878 an agreement was reached between the EIS and the Directors of the News whereby the Treasurer of the former was appointed Editor and Manager of the News.[1] After more than two years Donaldson must have been glad to be relieved of the demanding - and financially unremunerative - workload attendant on the editoriship of a weekly journal. Although with time the disparate elements in the teaching profession were to achieve a remarkable cohesion within the EIS, Donaldson was by now forced to recognize that its political influence remained disappointingly meagre, despite his unremitting effort. The first edition of the News, in January 1876, carried an account of a deputation of burgh schoolmasters, with Donaldson to the fore, to the Lord Advocate to petition for changes to the 1872 Act. Their reception was representative of many experiences Donaldson encountered with officials; the Lord Advocate could not see them and the deputation had to be content with an unsatisfactory interview with the Solicitor General. So insistent and untiring was the EIS and other groups of teachers in appealing to the Government on matters affecting education that in the end they became self defeating for "(u)ltimately, Parliamentarians and other men interested in education told representatives of sections of teachers that they were sick of memorials, petitions, and deputations actuated by self interest; that teachers were impeding the setting up of a national system of education; . . ."[2]

This experience drove home to Donaldson that dedication, enthusiasm,

1. This arrangement continued and the News remained financially sound until, with the severe loss of advertisements during the Great War, difficulties accumulated. In 1916 the company was voluntarily wound up, when the Institute took over publication until April 1918 after which the official organ appeared as the Scottish Educational Journal
2. A.J. Belford, Centenary Handbook of the EIS, (Edin., 1947), p.115.

high ideals and earnest belief in a cause are often insufficient to win through; so often all that was achieved was being snubbed by officials, treated off-handedly and given what is aptly termed, the run around. Only when allied with influence in high places might such effort prevail against bureaucracy and when in the future access to such influence offered itself to him, he would readily take full advantage of it.

The the early seventies Donaldson was conscious that the changes to the curriculum at the High School introduced in 1866 had resulted in what he decribed as "a kind of education not exactly adapted for those who go to the Universities, nor for those who go to business, but a sort of compromise between them."[1] It became apparent - and the same had happened in all the other schools he knew that had attempted a modern side to the curriculum - that the clever boys book the classical course, while "the idle and the stupid" took the modern. The School still lent heavily on the classical aspect of the curriculum since in the first four years attendance at the Latin and English classes - the latter included history and geography - were compulsory and in the fifth and sixth years Latin alone was essential. All the other classes were optional. Of course the classical course afforded the fullest expression of Donaldson's mind and most boys continued to take this, since a sound classical knowledge was still considered an essential part of a gentleman's education. However the value of introducing "modern" subjects into the curriculum was greatly reduced if they were regarded as soft options. Donaldson believed the declassé attitude to the modern subjects could only be remedied by requiring an academic standard to match that of the classical side. The status of these

1. RHS. Rector's Report 1872-73, p.6.

subjects now took a step forward, bringing the curriculum closer to that of the present day. He was confident that this effort to give a modern education was the first attempt in Scotland to carry out a system completely corresponding to those found at that time in the German Gymnasium and the Realschule.[1]

In 1881 he introduced a seventh class in response to the parents who felt that the entry age to Universities was so young. Donaldson spoke of parents feeling that 'dangers' beset the boy going to the University too young, obviously referring to the moral risks which Victorian parents and teachers were so anxious to guard against. The other reason was that the Indian Civil Service entry examination favoured the English boys simply because they were older when they left school. Donaldson's Seventh Class studied Latin, Greek and mathematics to a standard which he believed would enable them to pass with ease the highest obligatory MA examination in these subjects. However, the parents of boys going on to the University viewed this innovation as a waste of both time and money since on entering the University their sons were required to do work that was then much below them. On this subject Donaldson had some hard words for the Universities. "At the present moment the Universities are the greatest drag on the progress of the secondary schools in higher studies," he declared. "There is no level too low to prevent admission to our Universities but a boy soon reaches a point which renders his attendance at the classes of the University a mere form and probable waste of time. Practically this has been the conclusion reached by the (1876) Commission which sat on the Universities. It suggests some reforms which lie within

1. Ibid.

the power of the Universities to effect without legislation, but they have done absolutely nothing to carry out any of these recommendations."[1] Consequently, at least for the present, Donaldson had to concede defeat on this issue and discontinue his Seventh Class, for the conviction that the University entrance age should be raised and the school leaving age raised to meet it was too far in advance of the academic climate of the time. In common with other reformers in many fields Donaldson experienced the frustration of having to wait for public opinion to catch up with his progressive ideas.

Nevertheless he had for many years now been recognized as one of the foremost authorities on education and when early in 1880 the School Board in Aberdeen sought an independent examination of the Grammar School they turned to their illustrious alumnus. Donaldson spent some days at the School in early April examining every class and presenting the Board with a fulsome report the following month. Happily, he "formed a very favourable opinion of the boys of the School. Their behaviour during the whole of the examination was gentlemanly . . . the boys were obedient, attentive and respectful."[2] He was confident that the results obtained in the School were not behind those attained in other schools but he condemned the School's organisation, identifying the causes as those which had existed at the High School but which he had successfully dealt with there some years earlier. At Aberdeen antagonistic situations continued to arise between masters due to the old system still operating of fees being paid to individual masters. He recommended that this system be replaced by a general fund such as he had introduced

1. RHS: Rector's Report 1880-81.
2. Aberdeen School Board Minutes, p.299.

at the High School and that there should be a head of the School answerable to the Board and the public for the working of the departments, a Rector in the modern sense, who would be as much administrator as teacher and responsible for the efficient working of the entire School.[1] The Board was anxious to develop its modern side but Donaldson admitted that his experience in regard to this had not been encouraging, too frequently the modern side being composed of boys who "failed in the Classics and nearly everything else."[2] He thought this might be obviated by beginning the modern side at the same time as the classical with boys deciding when they reached the first class of the Grammar School which course to pursue. In the years ahead, Donaldson's advice was frequently sought to resolve the problems confronting schools and he was to be a Governor of Madras College, Wade Academy and Dollar Academy.

Donaldson was now fifty and to the youngsters he taught he seemed an aged and venerable figure. New boys regarded him with awe but soon this was transmuted into affection and respect. As Rector, while holding fast to sound beliefs and traditions, he had proved enlightened and progressive. The ideas which he expounded to Commissions about the importance of a broad education he put into practice at the High School. His success as a classical teacher emanated from the fact that to him the Ancient World was one with which he was intimately acquainted in all its many aspects and which his enthusiasm brought to life for others. To the senior classes he gave lectures on such topics as Greek architecture, sculpture and antiquities and the history of Greece from Turkish domination to the rise of modern Greece. These lectures extended to

1. Ibid. p.301.
2. Ibid. p.308.

visits in the evenings to the Donaldson home in Great King Street there to be shown his collection of photographs and engravings depicting the remains of Ancient Greece. Perhaps more importantly, from these lectures and visits the boys learned from him that knowledge was to be shared and enjoyed. He had promoted the teaching of the sciences, even elementary physiology, the importance of which he had been conscious since his stay in Germany as a young man. Since the sciences were optional, boys often took them, like drawing and singing, as a recreation. He believed in the importance of giving his pupils a wide variety of interest and knowledge as an entrance into both ancient and modern life and thought. "Had there been fewer subjects," a pupil reflected in later life, "we might have known more of some of them; but the value of the curriculum was that it opened to all of us so many roads into the world of human life and learning and gave us the opportunity to follow afterwards those which might appeal to us by their interest or utility."[1] He had spoken before Commissions of his belief that the school leaving age should be raised and he had tried in the High School to achieve this. That he failed did not reflect on his effort or the response of parents, but rather that, until the University raised its age of entry, parents saw little point in paying for a further year at school which their sons would effectively have to repeat at the University.

His approach to discipline was equally enlightened. He held it a fundamental principle that a boy should never be punished for any intellectual deficiency but only for moral faults and breaches of discipline. All through his years as a teacher the ease with which he

1. Aberdeen University Review, Vol. I, 1915, p.196.

maintained discipline was remarked on - not every master at the High School achieved this control for in 1880 he urged the necessity of suppressing the noise and disorder in some of the classrooms.[1] While many boys were aware that their Rector gave evidence to Commissions, had himself been a Royal Commissioner, was consulted on educational matters and occupied a highly respected position in the educational world and might regard him with greater admiration as a result, his work in these areas did not impinge on them in the way his presence in a classroom did. In his presence boys instinctively were conscious that his firmness was not to be trifled with but what endeared him were not his achievements in the world of education and learning beyond the High School nor his control of a class but that he exhibited the same patience with, and interest in, the slower pupils as he did in the academically more gifted. One former pupil spoke for many when years later he wrote to Donaldson that "although by no means a credit to you I know that the knowledge that you imparted there did me good service . . . any measure of success I have attained is greatly due to your patience with me."[2] When the time came for boys to leave the School, Donaldson made a point of seeing each individually in his study and after speaking kindly and encouragingly, he would bid the boy God-speed, adding "Always remember, my lad, that you are a Royal High School Boy."[3] With this adjuration and its clear inference that the Royal High School was set apart from, and above, other schools, these boys left to make their careers; many became notable scholars, men of science

1. RHS: Rector's Meeting, Minutes 1880.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 8929.
3. Ibid: Ms 8865. This Old Boy, Andrew Morrison, writing from Rhodesia in 1908, added "I have tried to do so, not always successfully I am afraid, but there have been times when your words came back to me with an hundred foldforce, and stood me in good stead."

and learning, others able administrators at home, in India and throughout the Empire, distinguished professional men or successful in business. For the remainder of his life, Old Boys - prominent and unknown alike - would write to him - and their sentiments were always the same - "I realise how much I owe to you for my start in life."[1]

Donaldson's pupils were not alone in remembering him with gratitude and affection. It was with genuine regret that the Edinburgh School Board, meeting at 25 Castle Street, received his resignation in February 1882, his twenty sixth year at the School. The Board recognised that both his reputation as a scholar and the respect in which he was held within his profession lent a vicarious lustre to the High School whose reputation as the foremost burgh school in Scotland he had not only maintained, but enhanced. Never complacent or given to resting on laurels, during his last few months as Rector Donaldson recommended that the division into a Classical and a Modern side should begin in the first and not, as it had been until then, in the fourth year, thus at last according the modern subjects an equality with the classics. The Board recorded its appreciation of "the great value of Dr Donaldson's services to the High School and to the cause of education generally."[2] Its members were conscious of how much they owed to his prudent counsel and unflagging zeal in the interests of the School but in addition to his achievements they remembered also his human qualities, acknowledging "the courtesy and gentleness he invariably displayed towards his colleagues."[3]

1. St Andrews University, Donaldson Papers, Ms 8416.
2. Ibid: Box 4/5.
3. Ibid.

When Donaldson took his leave of the Royal High School at the end of the summer term the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Sir Thomas Boyd, described him as "the most distinguished teacher in public schools in Scotland" and declared that his position and influence in the High School was not inferior to that of Dr Arnold at Rugby. Although this might be thought the sort of extravagant comparison not infrequently encountered on such occasions, closer consideration of the tribute reveals it to have considerable foundation. There were in Donaldson's relations and response to boys many of those incidents which contributed to the veneration with which the boys of Rugby beheld Arnold: the known respect and reputation of the man in the world of thought and letters beyond the walls of the school, and his strong moral influence were common to both men. Donaldson, like Arnold, exhibited an integrity, a truthfulness and total fairness which recognised no qualification and these features, conjoined as they were with his natural humility and ability to enter into the mind of a boy, were characteristics of all their actions.

Yet however apposite - and flattering - it was to be likened to such as Arnold - that "pure clear light" in the Victorian moral firmament, shining for "muscular Christianity" and enlightened educational progress - Donaldson's great success as a teacher sprang from his personality and the breadth of interpretation he accorded the teacher's rôle. Sixteen years earlier, in the year he became Rector, he had written of the sort of person a teacher should be. This was transparently autobiographical and it was the attributes he enumerated then that so many of his pupils remembered and bore witness to years later.

"I shall sketch one (a teacher) of the right kind, who may be known to some of my readers, a teacher full of real genuine life, with most of this living power of any teacher I know . . . He has his heart open for every yearning of humanity. Every noble sentiment finds an echo in him, and he pours forth his feelings in absolute confidence that his pupils will not think the less of him for appearing a fallible man. Such a teacher awakens within his pupils every kind of life. He opens up to them every field of human study, he inspires them with enthusiasm for everthing great; and long after they have passed from his presence, the seeds of thought bear fruit, often enough it may be in forms different from the fruit which appears in him, just because life is endlessly varied." 1

1. James Donaldson, Lectures in Education, (Edin., 1874) p.154-5. From Relation of Universities to the Working Classes, which first appeared in The Museum, April 1866.
The part omitted describes this teacher "In his early days he studied theology with all the earnestness of an earnest soul. He then threw himself heart and soul into the noblest modern literature, the German. He studied history, one portion of it especially, with exhaustive profundity. He betook himself to the rising science of education in Germany with a healthy mind. And now he devotes himself resolutely to independent researches into the art, the religion, the politics of the ancient world."

# CHAPTER 8.

By the summer of 1879 Donaldson's son, James Kennedy Donaldson, was always known as Jim, twenty-two and had recently been admitted as an advocate after studying law at Edinburgh University. That August Donaldson went alone to Paris from where he wrote to Jim who had taken a cottage at Callender.

"I am beginning to feel very anxious about your future, now my dear boy. You are very good in many ways; but you do not seem to have acquired the habit of regular steady work. You should resolutely make up your mind to devote a certain portion of your time to genuine work and to the cultivation of your mind and let nothing interfere with such work. It is essential for everyman to have full control over himself and to be able to refuse himself any transient pleasure, however strong its hold on him may be . . . And it would be a great blessing for you now to think of these matters and to buckle yourself up for the work. You know I am willing to do anything I can to help you: the only fear I have is that I may help you too much . . . May God's blessing be on you my dear boy." 1

It was a letter of sound advice to any young man but it also expressed all Donaldson's doubts and fears about Jim's future.

The Bar continued to be the recruiting ground for the future key political positions in Scotland, the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor General, and this partly accounted for there being always an over supply of advocates; young men often qualified with a view to future security but many could anticipate looking for employment for several years in another direction with the prospect that in time a position in the legal administration might be offered them. Donaldson was anxious that if Jim failed to secure a practice at the Bar, he would drift.

Later that year Donaldson began a friendship with the Earl of Rosebery, an association which was to have important consequences.

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 13/14, Letter to James Kennedy Donaldson, 5 August 1879.

Born in 1847, Rosebery had succeeded his grandfather as fifth earl in 1868, his father, Lord Dalmeny, having died in 1851. Ten years later he married Hannah de Rothschild, the only child of Baron and Baroness Meyer de Rothschild. The Baron had died in 1874 and the Baroness soon after, in 1877. When Rosebery married, the estates he had inherited secured him a substantial income of about £40,000 a year. On his marriage his income had increased by a further £100,000 from the trust fund of £700,000 established by Hannah's marriage settlement. As a result, his total gross income - at a time when income tax was minimal - was £140,000 a year. In addition, Mentmore and other Rothschild properties in Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire had been made over to him, for when Hannah's parents died she was bequeathed a fortune and Mentmore, a majestic mansion set in magnificent parkland, near Leighton Buzzard in Bedfordshre. Mentmore, which had been raised between 1850 and 1854, contained the collection of pictures, French furniture and objects d'art which Baron Meyer had ammassed - one of his dicta, novel at the time, was that it was cheaper to buy old French furniture than to furnish from Maples - and from his travels he returned with furniture which had belonged to Marie Antoinette, the chimney piece from Rubens' house in Antwerp, old masters, tapestries and china all of which bore testimony to the Baron's exceptional discernment and taste. Rosebery proved a worthy custodian and in his attitude to these possessions there was something of the museum curator manqué. He had been an enthusiastic collector, himself, since a schoolboy and with the passing years his acquisitions strained even the formidable capacities of his homes. With their enormous income, the Roseberys lived in a style which it is impossible to imagine today, each of their homes a treasure house run with the silent efficiency of a palace.

Rosebery had gambled heavily in his younger days; he had even, while an undergraduate at Balliol, kept a racehorse but when the College authorities, considering this improper, asked him to dispose of his horse, he chose to leave Oxford instead. This phase, however, was in the past and by the time Donaldson knew him, Rosebery's principal extravagances were pictures, old silver, young horses - and books. Of these, books were his greatest love. In 1872, he had as bachelor, bought The Durdans, a house near Epsom where he kept his stud, and when Donaldson and he met, was restoring the early Primrose seat, Barnbougle Castle, on the shore of the Forth, half a mile from his Scottish home, Dalmeny Park. At both The Durdans and Barnbougle he gathered libraries which impressed the most discerning bibliophiles. That at Barnbougle was essentially devoted to his unique collection of rare Scottish books and broadsheets[1] and was also to hold the fabulous Beckford Collection bought at the Beckford sale in 1882, numerous Burns' letters, a perfect 1786 Kilmarnock edition of Burns in its original wrappers and Charles I's Copy of the Booke of Common Prayer of 1637, annotated in the King's own hand. The Durdans' library was filled with equally rare volumes, including a perfect first edition of the Authorised Version of 1611, Kempis' De Imitatione Christi, a 1549 Book of Common Prayer and a Shakespeare First Folio. His interest in books was wide and gave to his conversation much of its interest and charm, "The past ever stood at his elbow," Churchill wrote of him, "He seemed to be attended by learning and history, and to carry into current events an air of ancient majesty."[2]

1. In 1927 Rosebery presented to the National Library of Scotland his collection of Scottish pamphlets - over two thousand - and books at Barnbougle.
2. W.S. Churchill, Great Contemporaries, (Lond., 1937), p.16.

It has often been repeated that Donaldson was Rosebery's tutor and that it was from this early relationship a lifelong friendship developed; this story was given wide publicity at the time of Donaldson's death. That Donaldson was Rosebery's tutor is apocryphyl for the latter's education was exclusively in England. Rosebery spent little time in Scotland between 1854 when his mother Lady Dalmeny remarried - her second husband, Lord Harry Vane, succeeded his brother as the 4th and last Duke of Cleveland in 1864 when he inherited the vast Cleveland Estates - until he inherited the Rosebery peerages and estates in 1868. Donaldson himself said that they had first met at a meeting in 1871 at which Rosebery took an important part, having travelled to London to speak, all of which suggests that it was probably politics which brought them together on this occasion.[1] There is no reference, even by Donaldson, of them having met again between this meeting in 1871 and 1878 from when their close friendship dates. Apparenty Donaldson was first drawn into Rosebery's orbit when his help was enlisted in collecting books. R.R. James states that Hannah Rosebery, conscious of her deficient education, asked Donaldson to teach her Scottish history and literature[2] with the inference that he knew Rosebery as a consequence. If, when Donaldson was yet unknown to them, Hannah or more likely Rosebery, was casting around Edinburgh for a tutor in Scottish literature and history, it seems improbable that he would have chosen Donaldson. The Rector of the High School was

1. Dundee Advertiser. 5 November 1911. At this date Donaldson acknowledged that he had known Rosebery for forty years. More accurately it was forty years since they had first met for he also said that they did not become more intimate until 1878.
2. R.R. James, Rosebery, (Lon., 1983), p.88.

a renowned classical scholar but there are no grounds for believing that his learning in Scottish literature or history extended beyond the general knowledge of these subjects enjoyed by an educated man of his day. If he did give Hannah such instruction it would be much more likely that this was an extension of his friendship with the Roseberys which occurred after he had become an habitué in their homes. Lord Crewe, Rosebery's friend, contemporary, son-in-law and biographer, describes Donaldson as the former's "Edinburgh friend"[1] and first mentions him in Rosebery's life in 1880. This tends to suggest that while the friendship began to develop in 1878, Donaldson was not recognized as a member of Rosebery's coterie until two years later.

Donaldson was admirably suited for searching out old and rare books. He had a genuine love of these which he had himself collected since a boy and his own collection, while of necessity modest when set beside Rosebery's collecting, was one of his abiding pleasures. Not only did he have a knowledgeable interest in Scottish literature but he also knew personally many of the second hand and antiquarian booksellers in Edinburgh, was well placed to learn of collections which might be offered for sale and what they contained. Although Rosebery's wealth was such that he could well afford to pay any price for a volume he fancied, if Donaldson considered the sum asked unreasonable, he had no hesitation in declaring to Rosebery that it was "an exorbitant price and I see no use in giving it to him when by waiting a little and searching a little we can get it at a reasonable price."[1] Donaldson was soon writing to Rosebery as often as twice a week, reporting on

1. Crewe, Lord Rosebery, (Lond., 1931), Vol. I, p.40, 1st and only Marquess of Crewe (1858-1945) he married in 1899 as his second wife, Rosebery's younger daughter, Lady Margaret (Peggy) Primrose (1881-1968) who reigned at Crewe House as one of the great political hostesses in the years before the Great War, and later at the British Embassy in Paris.

progress in tracking down sought editions or with information on collections he had heard might be coming on the market. He needed little excuse to put pen to paper and the friendship grew apace; in his earliest letters he signed himself "Your faithful servant" but within less than a year the friendship, on Donaldson's part at least, had intensified to such an extent that he had become "Yours very devotedly". At this time the aristocracy was still a powerful and influential force; it would be another thirty years before the legislative powers of the House of Lords were clipped; even in the House of Commons courtesy titles and younger sons were strongly represented and while for convenience a peer had a house in London, his home was in the country where the management of large estates dominated the social and poliical life in the counties. Yet even allowing for the enormous consequence of the aristocracy, the power compounded of land ownership, inheritance, wealth, reinforced by the web of social, political and consanguineous relationships, there is today something singularly demeaning in a man of Donaldson's position adoping a posture of such obeisance. Returning to Edinburgh in the late summer of 1880, reinvigorated from his holiday sea bathing at Dieppe, he went quite overboard in his protestations of admiration and devotion. "I can express to you all the gratitude I feel for all your kindness to me during the past months," he wrote to Rosebery in September, "but most of all I feel it a peculiar privilege to have the friendship of one who is noble to his inmost core and whom in all circumstances I can love with the deepest affection."[2] To

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/19, Letter to Lord Rosebery, 6 October 1880.
2. Ibid: Ms 10013/17, letter to Lord Rosebery, 20 September 1880.

Rosebery, secure in the effortless conviction of effortless superiority, such recognition of his Olympian qualities was no more than his birthright.

The following month Donaldson was assuring Rosebery that Jim was "entirely at your disposal"[1] and suggesting that the latter could write letters for him or see people that Rosebery would rather avoid, explaining that Jim "would be very much better for having work definitely laid out for him and he is at an age when the discipline of submitting to positive orders is the best for him," adding, "He is not much troubled with briefs yet."[2] The truth was that Jim was not troubled with briefs at all and never would be. Recommending his son for something in the rôle of Private Secretary was not really the nepotism that it appears at first encounter. Donaldson was primarily concerned that Jim should have something to occupy him and he sincerely believed that he could be helpful to Rosebery in the way he suggested. There was no suggestion that such work would be either full time or financially remunerative but Donaldson was fully aware of the importance of influence and connections: he knew the ways of the world and such an association with Rosebery, should it prove satisfactory, might well lead to other - and better - things. "No public man," he was to tell Rosebery some years later, "rises to eminence except through the assistance of friends."[3] Anyhow Donaldson had been prompted to make the suggestion since Rosebery had already requested Jim to write to him, an invitation occasioned

1. Ibid: Ms 10013/17, letter to Lord Rosebery, 20 September 1880.
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/25, letter to Lord Rosebery, 13 October 1880.
3. Ibid: Ms 10013/121, letter to Lord Rosebery, 8 November 1888.

initially by Rosebery's candidature in the forthcoming Rectorial election at Edinburgh University. "There is an almost utter stagnation of politics or at least of political news in Edinburgh at present," Jim duly reported in his first letter on 6th october 1880; there were "only trifling items of news but I thought it better to give you whatever came to hand when you had so kindly asked me to write."[1]

Donaldson had needed no invitation to eagerly involve himself in promoting Rosebery for the Rectorship. His opponent was a Professor within the University, Sir Robert Christison[2] - "He is eighty three years of age," Donaldson noted contemptuously, "is a dogged opponent of every kind of reform, is a violent Tory . . ."[3] Yet, despite this scathing indictment, these attributions had not been a noticeable handicap to Christison's career, indeed a Liberal Government, notwithstanding his politics, had in 1871 created him a baronet in recognition of his scientific eminence since when he had demonstrated a marked antagonism to Professor Playfair,[4] a University reformer well known to Donaldson. When originally approached about standing for Edinburgh Rosebery had been hesitant for he had doubts about the legality of doing so when he was already Lord Rector of Aberdeen University which had elected him in 1878. Donaldson immediately offered to go into this for him and also undertook to make enquiries to determine Rosebery's chance

1. Ibid: Ms 10013/17, letter to Lord Rosebery, 20 September 1880.
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/25, letter to Lord Rosebery, 13 October 1880.
3. Ibid: Ms 10013/121, letter to Lord Rosebery, 8 November 1880.
4. Lyon Playfair (1811-1898), 1st Baron Playfair of St Andrews. He had been Professor of Chemistry at Edinburgh (1858-1868) before being elected Liberal MP for Edinburgh and St Andrews Universities (1868-85) and later Leeds (1885-92).

of being elected, discussing the matter with Charles Cooper, a strong Liberal and admirer of Rosebery who was Editor of The Scotsman and with whom Donaldson was to be closely involved in promoting Rosebery and Liberal politics. "Cooper and I have come to the conclusion that you ought to stand for the Rectorship"[1] he informed Rosebery early in January. Not surprisingly, it was evident that Christison could count on support from medical students but Donaldson was nonetheless confident in assuring Rosebery that "according to the evidence you will have a strong party among them such as with your majority in the arts will render your election safe." Perhaps feeling that Rosebery might have some doubts about how objective an assessment this was, Donaldson added "I have taken care not to let my own feelings sway my judgment in this matter."[2]

Risking defeat held no charms for Rosebery but encouraged by this information he agreed to stand. Donaldson, however, did not intend that his contribution to his friend's campaign should be limited to calculating electoral probabilities and determined to take the offensive with a paper setting out the reasons why Rosebery should be elected and, equally, why Sir Robert should not. One advantage which Donaldson believed was in Rosebery's favour was that the University needed grants for the completion of the new Medical Classrooms and the conversion of existing ones for the use of other Faculties. "No one is more likely to be successful with the Government in procuring this grant than Lord Rosebery; for he has done great services to the state and has refused all honours offered to him. The man that does not ask for himself,

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms10013/32, letter to Lord Rosebery, 20 January 1881.

2. Ibid.

will be sure to get what he asks for a great University."[1] The extent of Donaldson's adulation and devotion to Rosebery is revealed: he is presented in superlatives, his culture, generosity, interest in sports and patronage of the arts stamp this resplendent personage as a true renaissance man, a Lorenzo the Magnificent of the living present, an identification which may well have suggested itself to Donaldson's mind when he concluded this piece of literary worship, "there can be no doubt that of all men who could be mentioned Lord Rosebery is most likely to show himself the true Rector Magnificus."[2]

Rosebery's homes held another attraction for Donaldson - he became, in a lighthearted way, besotted with Lady Rosebery. Hannah was overshadowed by her husband whose intellectual capacity impressed on her how deficient had been her own education. Indeed, it had been sketchy even by Victorian standards and Hannah earnestly resolved to make an effort to remedy this. Donaldson was only too willing to suggest books she might read and found an eager and responsive pupil. They were soon writing to each other regularly. It may well have been in response to her first letter that Donaldson wrote ecstatically to Rosebery in July 1880, "I received her letter today. It gave me very great pleasure . . . I mingle a great deal of affection with what a (illegible) would regard as worship . . ."[3] His adoration was total. The following May, on Rosebery's birthday, Donaldson wrote "to congratulate you on the unmingled blessedness you have in your wife. So simply true, so sincere in all things and so beautifully devoted to you. She would be an endless

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, undated but evidently written during the latter half of 1880.
2. Ibid.
3. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/14, letter to Lord Rosebery, 28 July 1880.

joy and blessing, if she were a penniless girl."[1] All this was true but the inescapable fact remained that Hannah was not an everyday penniless girl but the heiress of an immense Rothschild fortune which to Donaldson lent her an almost tangible aura. His infatuation was no secret and to his friends it was all charmingly amusing. Lord Reay, entreating him to stay at the Reays' home, Laidwawstiel near Galashiels, when returning from Mentmore held out solace, "We shall try to dry the tears which your separation from Mentmore naturally makes you shed in profusion."[2] For Donaldson the thirty year old Hannah from the other side of the tracks became an idealised object of affection, endowed with every virtue, worshipped on a pedestal. When Hannah reciprocated his regard, Donaldson's cup runneth over.

Thus as the autumn of 1880 faded and winter settled over the country, Donald blissfully happy, was cataloguing the library at Dalmeny,[3] ascertaining the gaps in the collection and searching out additions; Jim, at Rosebery's behest, was penning him a regular resumé of news and gossip about political developments in Edinburgh while Rosebery was immersing himself in Scottish administration. This was a matter long overdue for critical examination. Scotland was administered, in so far as central government was concerned, by the Lord Advocate and there was a growing body of opinion which protested at what often appeared a casual approach to Scottish affairs and was resolved to orchestrate mounting pressure for the establishment of a Secretaryship for Scotland. Before the winter had yielded to spring, Rosebery would be the acknowledged leader of this movement.

1. Ibid: Ms 10013/70, letter to Lord Rosebery, 6 May 1881.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6859, letter from Lord Reay, September 1882.
3. It was not until 1882 that Barnbougle was restored sufficiently to house the collection.

Rosebery's advent to the political stage was relatively recent, dating only from the previous year. By then, 1879, Gladstone's seat at Greenwich was recognized as unsafe: Disraeli's second administration had been in power since Gladstone's defeat in 1874 and now a General Election could not be far off. Although Gladstone was no longer leader of the Party - he had resigned in Hartington's favour in 1875 and was not to reclaim the position until the Liberal victory in 1880 - he was the unquestioned leader of Liberal opinion throughout the country and rather than accept a safe Edinburgh seat he was persuaded to contest Midlothian, long regarded as the preserve of the powerful Duke of Buccleuch, the leader of the Scottish Tories. A Liberal victory in Midlothian would not only be a crushing blow to the Tories but, as Rosebery quickly realized, would enormously increase his own influence and standing within the Liberal Party. Gladstone gladly accepted Rosebery's invitation to make his headquarters at Dalmeny Park and from there in the autumn of 1879 and again the following spring he set forth on his famous Midlothian Campaign - his adversary, Disraeli, called it a "pilgrimage of passion" - to turn out the Government, essentially because of its foreign policy.[1] Gladstone introduced novel but wonderfully effective methods of political campaigning; the Queen might shudder at a politician addressing the public from a railway carriage but the electors were ecstatic and such was the compelling force of his oratory that unprecedented crowds, many of whom had travelled long distances, often stood in pouring rain to hear him speak. Such gatherings demonstrated one of Gladstone's greatest gifts, the ability to unify Liberal

1. Although Disraeli's electoral prospects had also been damaged by the beginning in 1879 of the agricultural depression which was to persist into the nineties, of greater moment in sweeping the Liberals to victory was that they were ahead of their rivals in both democratic oratory and electoral organisation.

politics. The great and consistent problem confronting Liberal leaders was to secure a policy which would transcend the disparate interests of the separate groups, each demanding priority for its legislative demands, which comprised Liberal support. The campaign against Beaconsfieldism was almost universally accepted as a unifying cause before which the sectional agitation within the Party was stilled, albeit only temporarily.[1] The election, when it came in April 1880, returned Gladstone for Midlothian and the Liberals to power with an overwhelming majority of two hundred and eleven seats in the House.

In the fight for Midlothian, Gladstone's success owed not a little to the extraordinary amplitude with which the Scotsman reported his every movement. "Mr Gladstone's reception in the Heart of Midlothian the Editor, Charles Cooper[2], later recalled, "was, I verily believe the most wonderful ever accorded to any man in the purely political sphere."[3] In the age before wireless and television usurped much of the impact of newspapers, Cooper ensured that his readers had lengthy reports on the unprecedented demonstrations of homage that everywhere met Gladstone on his progresses through the constituency, the extraordinary power of his personality and electrifying impact on audiences

1. D.A. Hamer, Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery, (Oxf., 1872), p.82-83.
In confining their campaign to the reasons why the Tories had to be removed from office, the Liberals won the elections without formulating any legislative programme of their own.
2. Although Charles Cooper was appointed Editor in 1880, he had held the position in all but name since the death of Alexander Russel in 1876. His interest in politics had secured him a post as a parliamentary reporter before becoming the first London correspondent appointed by The Scotsman. In 1868 he became Assistant Editor to Russel and between then and 1881 took a prominent part in opening the Press Gallery of the House to The Scotsman, eventually achieving this by personally approaching Mr Gladstone.
3. Charles A. Cooper, An Editor's Retrospect, (Lond., 1896), p.388.

as he spread abroad the Gospel of Liberalism. When, distanced by more than eighty years, R.R. James wrote his biography of Rosebery he accurately evaluated where the benefits of the Midlothian election really lay:

> "The impact of the campaign upon the electorate as a whole is a matter of considerable historical controversy; its effects upon Gladstone's claim to the Liberal leadership and upon Rosebery's subsequent career, however, were incalculably great . . . The first Midlothian campaign gave Rosebery a fabulous reputation in his own country, and not even Chamberlain in Birmingham ever commanded the admiration and veneration which surrounded Rosebery in Scotland." 1

Also as a result of this campaign, Charles Cooper developed a close personal friedship with Rosebery and, as a consequence, with Donaldson. "Cooper became", the history of the Scotsman records, "to a great extent, Rosebery's eyes and ears in Scotland,"[2] a description which was to be no less applicable to Donaldson. Undoubtedly the Editor of the Scotsman and the Rector of the High School knew each other for several years before the Midlothian Campaign but from this time they were to work closely together to promote Rosebery's political career. For this election - with the thrilling presence of the Grand Old Man at Dalmeny and all the attendant excitement, even hysteria, of the campaign - which had projected Rosebery to the forefront of the Liberal Party had at the same time converted Donaldson to an active political involvement. He had been a Liberal all his life but there is no evidence that he had afforded his politics any overt expression before now.

He was later to claim that his allegiance to Liberalism dated from a clearly recollected experience while a schoolboy in Aberdeen,

1. R.R. James, Rosebery, (Lond., 1963), p.100.
2. Various Authors, The Glorious Privilege, (Edin. & Lond., 1969), p.71.

but his political awareness and orientation had been to some degree conditioned and coloured by the liberal ideas absorbed with the tenets of the Congregational Chuch. Further, in gratitude for the first Reform Act Scotland had become fervently loyal to the Liberals and were to remain so for most of the century. This attachment had been strengthened with the Disruption for not the least important consequence of that event "was the accession of strength it brought to the Liberals, for after 1843 the greater part of the Free Church vote went consistently to this Party."[1] Nowhere had this strong Liberal fidelity been more apparent than in Aberdeen where all fifteen ministers of the Established Church resigned their charges that year. When the young Donaldson was growing up in Aberdeen Liberalism was as the air he breathed and it would indeed have been remarkable had he become other than a Liberal. How much his active participation in politics after the Midlothian Campaign was attributable to the exhiliration of the contest and how much a matter of following Rosebery's lead is debatable; the absence of controversial issues in the election and the direction of Donaldson's subsequent political activity suggests that the latter was of greater significance.

Thus, although Donaldson's origins and background were so different from those of Rosebery, the two men shared a strong faith in the Liberal political philosophy, a belief that society in all its facets should be allowed to progress and develop according to the application of liberal principles. And Donaldson's friendship with Rosebery offered him access to the political world, not through petitions, delegations, civil servants and government officials - he had ample experience of

1. W. Ferguson, Scotland from 1689 to the Present, (Edin., 1968), p.316.

the frustration of these tactics and how they were invariably to no avail - but direct to the ear of the most prominent political figure in Scotland, a personage to whom Donaldson knew he could be of use and whose effective sponsorship of Gladstone in Midlothian had caused him to be seen by 1880 as the rising star of Scotland. Rosebery's star was indeed in the ascendant and Donaldson had decided to attach himself to it.

Gladstone's administration which had taken office in the spring of 1880 amidst such high expectations, with an overwhelming majority in the House of Commons and backed by the enthusiasm of the electorate, soon found itself in difficulties. The Government had early suffered a major humiliation when the House expelled Bradlaugh[1] against its advice, and with an appalling increase in agrarian outrages the problems of Ireland assumed dark and sinister proportions. The Government was further humiliated when charges against Parnell and a number of his countrymen were dismissed. As if all this were not sufficient to contend with, at the end of 1880 trouble broke out in South Africa with the Boers, impatient about the promised annexation of the Transvaal and the defeat at Majuba Hill, and the Government was forced to negotiate a peace. It was amidst this series of distractions, with Scotland continuing to be neglected, that Rosebery delivered a speech in the Lords on a scheme for Home Rule for Scotlad. The Scottish press, with The Scotsman to the fore, took up the cry and the campaign steadily increased throughout the summer of 1881.

1. Charles Bradlaugh, a professed agnostic, was determined to sit in the house without taking the oath.

Parallel with this was a growing conviction in Scotland that Rosebery should have a government position, and Rosebery himself believed that a place in the Cabinet, and nothing less, was his due. "You can scarcely have any idea how strong the affection of the Scottish people for you is." Donaldson wrote him that autumn. "In all poliical and very many social gatherings you are the first they think of."[1] In the beginning Donaldson had been content to confine himself to political observations and factual commentary but this was rapidly replaced with open political advice. As early as May 1881 Donaldson was telling Rosebery,

". . . as to yourself I feel quite sure that the work of a Minister would be better for you than any amount of desultory work which you can perform as an Independent Peer. Ministerial work must of itself be a great education, and if I were you, it must be a question with me how far personal cosiderations even of the most chivalrous and unselfish nature should prevent me from taking advantage of this training when the opportunity presents." 2

Donaldson revealed where his sights were set when he went on to point out that with such experience Rosebery would be better prepared to be Prime Minister. "I think you should hesitate before closing your mind against all offers of office," he concluded.

Only three days later, Granville[3], while staying at The Durdans, offered Rosebery the Under Secretaryship at the India Office which Rosebery refused, explaining to Gladstone at Downing Street the following week that the office did not attract him since it would divorce

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/21, letter to Lord Rosebery, 6 October 1880.
2. Ibid: Ms 10013/65, letter to Lord Rosebery, 6 May, 1881.
3. Earl Granville (1815-1891), a close confidant of Gladstone, was at this time Foreign Secretary, a position he had previously held on three occasions (1851-52, 1870-74, and 1880-85).

him from Scotland. In this detemination that something should be done for Scotland he was enthusiastically aided and abetted by Donaldson whose identification with Rosebery was such as to cause him to adopt the first person plural. "I hope we shall soon be able to show the government what is thought here of the management of Scottish Affairs," he wrote hopefully the day before Rosebery met Gladstone, "almost everyone I meet talks of the subject and all are of the same opinion that there is no hope for Scotland till she gets her minister in the Cabinet."[1] Imperceptibly, Donaldson was assuming the rôle of Rosebery's man in Scotland; on social terms with many of consequence in Edinburgh from the Lord Advocate down, he was admirably placed to glean news and gossip from the grapevines of his social and professional connections. And he could be sure that the views he expressed on the necessity of the creation of a Scottish office were exactly what Rosebery liked to hear. By the summer he was assuring Rosebery that the people not only wanted a Minister but equally, that he should be that Minister:

> "I believe that Scotland is almost unanimous on the subject. It wishes a Minister always with the condition that he is in the Cabinet. But I find it difficult to get people to agitate the question immediately unles I can get personal interviews with them or get the leaders written for them. However I have no doubt that Scotland will soon express itself from one end of the country to the other and it is emphatically for a minister and for you." 2.

By 1881 Jim Donaldson stll had no real employment but he had been immensely flattered by Rosebery's request that he write him with whatever news he came by. Whether Jim realised it at the time or not, Rosebery had good reason to appear interested in him; for not everyone in Scotland wished to see the system of Scottish administration altered. The Lord

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/72, letter to Lord Rosebery, 13 May 1881.
2. Ibid: Ms 10013/82, letter to Lord Rosebery, 10 June 1881.

Advocate and the Faculty of Advocates were not unanimously in favour of any change which would affect the responsibilities of the former whose position combined both a legal and a political function and the existing system had been for many advocates the means to social advancement and even to ennoblement. As an advocate without occupation around the Faculty, Jim Donaldson provided Rosebery with a direct and immediate line of communication to the responses, decisions and general manoeuvrings of its members in the struggle to translate a Secretary for Scotland from theory to reality. Nor is it meaningful to try to evaluate the significance of Jim's activities on Rosebery's behalf as opposed to those of his father. Probably for the only time in their lives, father and his son were working as a team, both were enthusiastic Liberals and both discerned advantages by cultivating Rosebery's friendship. Being entrusted with relaying information to no less a person than Lord Rosebery afforded Jim with a gratifying sense of importance. Whatever his shortcomings in other directions he certainly did not lack enthusiasm for his new rôle, writing eagerly in January 1881:

> "We had a short debate at our anniversary bar meeting which I thought might interest you. A member asked the Dean if his attention had been drawn to a paragraph in the London correspondence of the Scotsman to the effect that "the Home Secretary has under consideration the desireableness of separating the political from the legal duties of the Lord Advocate. Traynor 1 pointed out the inveterate habit of the Faculty memoralising against a thing after it had been done . . . If the faculty were decided to take action, action ought to be immediate." 2

On this occasion the Faculty promptly decided to appoint a committee and write to the Prime Minister and the Lord Advocate for information.

1. John Traynor (1834-1929) was at this time a successful advocate and later became a prominent Judge of the Court of Session (1885-1904).
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10077/25, letter of Lord Rosebery, 13 January 1881.

However, some members had been displeased by this action. "To know the reason," Jim explained with a measure of conceit, "one would have to have an acquaintance with the working of wheels within wheels only to be gained by belonging to one of the factions into which the Liberals here are split".[1] Less than a week later he was hastening off another letter:

"There is nothing new that is certain about the position of the Lord Advocate. However there may be said to be three parties amongst us: - those who are opposed to any change whatsoever: - those (a very small section) who don't care what change is made, and those who think the Lord Advocate's position would be really improved by the institution of a Secretary for Scotland, who possibly might be in the Upper House, but would strongly object to the mere substitution of an Under Secretary, the minion of the Home Office, for the Advocate as manager of Scotch business. These latter agree that Scotch business is chiefly legislative the executive being as compared with Ireland for instance, comparatively unimportant . . . On the other hand, the appointment of a Principal Secretary would add greatly to the importance of the department and give us a considerable statesman whose sole duty it would be to attend to Scotch affairs and initiate measures respecting Scotland. The idea is that if the Secretary sat in the upper House the Lord Advocate might represent the department in the Commons. That seems the most reasonable view but I fear the first view represents the position of the majority of the Faculty." 1.

The opposition of the majority of the Faculty would of course present a major obstacle to the establishing of a Secretary for Scotland. Rosebery's inside informer assiduously plied him with fulsome reports on which way the wind was blowing. Change seemed no closer when the following month Jim reported on a meeting that had been called,

"to consider the rumoured change in the position of the Lord Advocate, at which Guthrie Smith Sheriff of Aberdeenshire gave notice that he would move a resolution 'that the Faculty while of opinion that Scotch affairs have not received in recent years the attention in Parliament to which they are entitled, are also of opinion that the creation of a new department to perform duties hitherto discharged by the Lord Advocate of Scotland is unnecessary and inexpedient.'"

1. Ibid: Ms 10077/26, 27, letter to Lord Rosebery, 13 January 1881.
2. Ibid: Ms 10077/28, letter to Lord Roseber, 18 January 1881.

This, as Jim knew, would be dampening news for Rosebery so he endeavoured to end on an optimistic note. "I think however," he assured him, "that good Counsels are gaining ground."[1] His optimism was not wholly misplaced; five days later he was able to inform Rosebery that Guthrie Smith had withdrawn his motion "in deference it was understood to the wish of the Lord Advocate - I suppose the wonderful energy of the Faculty has as usual been a flash in the pan."[2] Jim's scepticism proved justified; the wonderful energy of the Faculty faltered and, at least temporarily, the agitation within it for a Secretary of State for Scotland lost momentum.

At the end of July 1881 a vacancy occurred at the Home Office; Gladstone offered the post to Rosebery with special responsibility for Scottish affairs. Although arrangements in this regard remained as unsatisfactory as before, not least since the control of the Lord Advocate remained unchanged, Gladstone gave Rosebery to understand that these were only temporary. "I do not think the arrangement would last very long in its present form" he confided to Rosebery, "there must be within the next six months further manipulation of political affairs; and with this there is the likelihood of developments uncertain as to time, but certain, and so more than a likelihood to that element."[3]

Rosebery had steadfastly refused any office since this government had been formed on the grounds that to accept would be open to misconstruction - self interest in inviting Gladstone to Dalmeny for the Midlothian Campaigns - but also because he had been piqued at not being

1. Ibid: Ms 10077/50, letter to Lord Rosebery, 14 February 1881.
2. Ibid: Ms 10077/65, letter to Lord Rosebery, Febuary 1881.
3. Quoted in R.R. James, Rosebery, (Lond., 1963), p.122.

speedily invited to join the Cabinet. Now as he endeavoured to untangle Gladstone's grammar he concluded that they had an understanding that there would definitely be change: notwithstanding that the position was less than he sought, he agreed to enter the Government. On learning the news, Donaldson dashed off a letter assuring him that "everybody will feel that it is a modest act on your part to accept the invitation for the good of Scotland and for the strengthening of the Liberal Party."[1]

During the forenoon of 17 November 1881 Donaldson learned that Professor Black - "a very big corpulent man" was how he described him - had died that morning at his home in Aberdeen where he had held the Chair of Hmanity (Latin), a Crown appointment, since 1855. Donaldson professed that when he first heard of the vacancy thus created he had no idea of putting himself forward as a candidate.[2] This may well have been true for he was now fifty, his position was secure and both professionally and socially he was a respected figure; circumstances in which few men might wish to embark on a new career or uproot themselves after living for a quarter of a century in Edinburgh. A week later, however, he was considering the advantages which the position would offer; the income of between £800 and £850 a year was as good as his salary from the High School and in addition, a house went with the Chair as the official residence of the Professor of Latin. Moreover, the position involved only five months work each year which would afford him ample opportunity to pursue his literary interests.[3] His hesitation

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/84, letter to Lord Rosebery, 1 August, 1881.
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/114, letter to Lord Rosebery, 24 November 1881.
3. Ibid.

owed less to the prospect of leaving the High School than moving away from Edinburgh. Athough it was now almost twenty years since he had first applied for a chair, what he coveted all these years was the Greek Chair at Edinburgh University and he had lived with the expectation of being appointed to this when it became vacant, his hopes further sustained by his continued friendship with Blackie who had held the Chair now since leaving Aberdeen in 1852. Blackie told Donaldson that he had no intention of retiring - it was rare for professors to retire, if this was their wish they were required to show good cause why they should be allowed to do so and consequently most died in office - and Donaldson persuaded himself that he would have a better chance of getting the Edinburgh Chair, when Blackie was eventually called to God, from a professorship at Aberdeen than from the Rectorship of the High School.[1] And he had Margaret and Jim to think of. The latter was still living under the family roof in Great King Street, idling around Edinburgh and whatever reservations his father had about leaving him on his own, time was to prove them more than justified. Margaret had her own reasons for being unenthusiastic at the idea of leaving Edinburgh now, for in 1877 her brother, James Kennedy, whom she had seen only twice since he left for the Indian Mission field in 1839, returned home and since the following year had presided over the Congregational Church at nearby Portobello. It did not take Donaldson long, however, to discern where his best interests might lie. But now there was also Rosebery. "The advantages," Donaldson confided to him a week after Black's death, "seem to me to preponderate on the side of the chair. But," he hastened to add, "I should not dream of standing for

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/115, letter to Lord Rosebery, 28 November 1881.

it, if you thought that my presence in Edinburgh would be more serviceable to you. I am very happy in Edinburgh and I should be quite content to stay, if you thought that the best."[1]

Donaldson was so in thrall to Rosebery that he was prepared to place his future wholly in Rosebery's pleasure. Or so it seemed. For their relationship was now so close that Rosebery surely knew in which direction his friend's aspirations lay; in deferring to Rosebery, Donaldson was making a politic gesture of devotion to furthering his interests while confident that Rosebery would not ask him to stay. At the Home Office with special responsibility for Scottish affairs, Rosebery was responsible for recommending to the Queen appointees for Regius Chairs. Not long before the vacancy occurred at Aberdeen the Chair in Natural History at Edinburgh fell vacant and during December and January, Donaldson was busy providing Rosebery with his opinion of the candidates for this chair.[2] Not surprisingly, in due course, Donaldson was appointed to the Professorship at Aberdeen, and on 30 March he travelled there for his presentation to the Chair.[3] Donaldson sold 20 Great King Street[4] and a few days before his visit to Aberdeen, the family moved to 21 Douglas Terrace where they would live until leaving Edinburgh at the end of the summer term.

Late in June the Donaldsons moved into 11 College Bounds (known today as Divinity Manse) in Old Aberdeen. Less grand than their home

1. Ibid: MS 10013/81, Letter to Lord Rosebery, 19 December 1881.
2. Ibid: Ms 10013/81 and 10013/82, letters to Lord Rosebery, 19 December 1881 and 18 January 1882 respectively.
3. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/140, letter to Lord Rosebery, 24 March 1882.
4. This fine house in the New Town was sold for £2,300, with legal costs amounting to £4.2.4.

in Gt King Street, this classic late Georgian box of two floors and gables in pristine granite has, nonetheless, a robust and unpretentious charm. Although in the midst of the University, the house was secluded, set in generous grounds and with its back to College Bounds from which it was separated by a high wall. Although before moving in Donaldson had been "in despair about room for my books"[1] - this was not a pressing problem for over the summer he was to be hardly ever there and did not anticipate staying - by mid October when he was at living in Aberdeen rather than making only short visits, he claimed to be delighted with his new home. "The house and the garden are exactly suited to the scholar. I am as it were shut off from the world and yet quite near to it," he told Rosebery, not forgetting to add "It is a pleasure also to think that it is through you that I enjoy this pleasure and repose.[2]

Donaldson gratefully acknowledged his indebtedness to Rosebery but that pleasure and repose of which he wrote was not an accurate reflection of how he felt. For although he professed to be exceedingly happy, with the opportunity of doing the sort of work he liked and no longer harassed by what he now chose to describe as the endless public duties which had burdened him in Edinburgh - he had been president or vice-president of about eighteen different associations in the city - the truth was that Donaldson was profoundly distrait. The cause of his distress lay in Edinburgh.

Even as Donaldson was awaiting the decision about the Aberdeen Chair, the health of the boisterous Blackie faltered and he was so

1. Ibid: Ms 10013/147, letter to Lord Rosebery, 1 June, 1882.
2. Ibid: Ms 10013/181, letter to Lord Rosebery, 18 October 1882.

unwell that when the Senatus met on 28 January it was constrained to make alternative arrangements for teaching his classes. When in the summer he resigned, Donaldson's dismay may readily be imagined; although the Senatus Minutes for 1 August record Blackie's decision it is highly probable that Donaldson at least had wind of his friend's intention before this.[1] Blackie was to survive in rude good health until 1898 but the hapless Donaldson was rendered immediately in a state of almost frenzied excitement which was to continue without respite until Blackie's successor was known. He had calculated that the professorship at Aberdeen would clinch him securing the position when it fell vacant and this had been the deciding factor in leaving Edinburgh. It was true that unlike Edinburgh Aberdeen was a Regius Chair - a political appointment - but he believed his prospects at Edinburgh no less good. After all, he had lived there since 1857, from 1866 he had been Rector of the High School, closely associated with the retiring incumbent, highly regarded as a scholar and certainly his many influential friends would ensure that he was elected. All in all, the possibility of the position being given to someone else could be discounted. Indeed, as recently as the previous December, Donaldson had been seated at a dinner next to Sir Alexander Grant, Principal of Edinburgh University, who was "quite demonstrative in showing me that he wished me to get the Greek Chair at Edinburgh. I looked through him all the time," he told Rosebery, "and saw all your goodness to me, I now get a great deal of kindness through you."[2] Donaldson had reason to be confident for as the Edinburgh Courant, a staunchly Tory paper - intoned:

1. On Blackie's death, Peter Bayne wrote to Donaldson: "very few, I should say, have known him better than you did." St. Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 8182, letter from Peter Bayne 22 December 1895.
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/119, Letter to Lord Rosebery, 19 December, 1881.

"The resignation of Professor Blackie was hardly made public before certain supporters of the Government thought themselves able to point out his successor. According to them the only possible Professor of Greek was Dr Donaldson. The ground of their faith in the late Rector of the High School was not his Greek scholarship, altho his reputation in that way is high enough; nor was it his proved professional ability. Their argument was of a much simpler sort. 'Dr Donaldson is a friend of Lord Rosebery; Lord Rosebery is a Liberal; the Liberals are in power - therefore, on Dr Donaldson will the vacant appointment be conferred.'" 1

This was a reasonable assumption, yet the election of the new Professor was to be neither as simple nor as predictable as many forecasted. Appointments to the Edinburgh Chairs were made by seven "Curators of Patronage", three of whom were appointed by the University Court and the remaining four by the Town Council,[2] the members of which were also the Governors - Heritors - of George Heriot's Hospital.[3] The case of Heriot's Hospital had been the most controversial to be considered by the Moncrieff Commission which had been shocked to learn in evidence before it - indeed boasted of - that the Councillors who had supported the introduction of fees in the Heriot outdoor schools in 1870 had as a result been turned out at the next municipal election. The Commissioners, among whom Donaldson was prominent, reported that "the kind of control and pressure which is here indicated is one to which the Governors of such an institution ought not to be exposed, and is incompatible with due administration."[4] The Commission recommended that none of the changes proposed by the Heritors be approved until the Governing body had been changed but by the summer of 1882, when the

1. Edinburgh Courant, 16 September 1882.
2. Prior to 1858 the Town Council enjoyed the exclusive patronage of all the University Chairs. After a bitter political controversy this compromise whereby the Council agreed to share its right of patronage with members of the University was effected by the Universities (Scotland) Act of 1858.
3. The Heritors comprised the 41 members of the Town Council and the 13 ministers of the city.
4. Moncrieff Commission, First Report, 1879, p. lxxxi.

matter of the empty Greek Chair came before the Council the situation, so deplored by the Commission, remained unaltered. The composition of governing bodies, however, was an issue very much alive. The Liberal Government was prepared to legislate to compulsorily reform endowments but had encountered forceful opposition from the Radical and Home Rule wing of the Party in Scotland who championed "popular representation" which they believed was threatened by the Government's proposed action. Feelings were running high between what became known as the "Heriot Ring" - those who defended the status quo in the management of Heriot's - and other Liberals, in the forefront of whom Donaldson was conspicuous. The Heriot Ring was sufficiently effective to defeat attempts at legislation in 1880 and again in 1881 but the following year the Government made sufficient concessions to ensure enough support to get the Bill enacted. This, the Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act, established the Burleigh Commission and provided that governing bodies were to include a minimum - two thirds - representation from town councils or school boards.

Donaldson had been closely identified with the unsuccessful Bills of 1880 and 1881 and with that eventually enacted late in 1882. His steadfast and determined attachment to the principles of the legislation, his known association with Rosebery and Cooper and, not least, that in this struggle he had been on the winning side, earned him bitter resentment and hostility among the Council. Of this he had been left in no doubt; at Lord Aberdeen's last dinner that year as Lord High Commissioner at Holyrood in early June, Donaldson had been seated next Bailie Anderson who told him bluntly that "the Town Council were very

angry with me."[1] Yet Donaldson apparently failed to take seriously this explicit warning of the Council's attitude towards him nor to have fully appreciated their implied consequences. It was vexing and inconvenient that there should be opposition to him within the Council at such a time, but he was confident that he would win over the necessary majority. A few days after the Holyrood dinner, Donaldson travelled north to Aberdeen where he stayed for only ten days before returning to Edinburgh.

The forthcoming election has now become an idée fixe as he set about trying to find out how the individual curators intended to vote. Two of them he approached himself, evidently with no qualms about the propriety of such an action. One of these whom he approached so blatantly, Magistrate James Colson, "unreservedly said he would vote for me and do everything he could"[2] and told Donaldson that he would sound out the veteran radical politician, Duncan McLaren, who had been MP for Edinburgh from 1865 until the previous year and from as far back as 1836 had been actively engaged in creating the outdoor schools funded from the Heriot Trust. The other approached, the Lord Provost, Thomas Boyd "said that he thought that I had greater claims than any one and that he was delighted I was to be a candidate and that there would be an opportunity for keeping me in Edinburgh."[3] Either sincerity had no meaning at all or the Curators' allegiances were so fluid as to make predictions well nigh impossible for by 1 October Donaldson

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/152, letter to Lord Rosebery, 8 June 1882.
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/158, letter to Lord Rosebery, 23 August 1882
3. Ibid.

was sure that these three - Colston, McLaren and Boyd - were opposed to his election.[1] Meanwhile Donaldson reluctantly left Edinburgh before the end of August, travelling south to the Leconfields' at Petworth where he was intent on examining the classical sculpture. On summer days this lovely house embowered in a sylvan demesne worthy of Oberon and Titania, was calculated to soothe a troubled breast but now nothing could distract Donaldson's mind from the Greek Chair. Indeed distance only succeeded in giving rein to what he imagined might be happening in Edinburgh; hearing nothing, his anxiety increased. Resolving that nothing must be left to chance, before departing from Petworth for Mentmore he wrote to all the Curators whom he had been unable to see personally in Edinburgh.

His friend at The Scotsman office, Charles Cooper, sent him what news he had on the last day of August. "One of our people here," he ominously informed Donaldson, had spoken to Baillie Cranston about the Chair. "Cranston said that the Town Council and Curators were resolved to punish you for the part you had taken in regard to the Endowments Bill, and that they would not support you . . . said they had talked the latter over and had resolved to exclude you." Despite this, he assured Donaldson, "For my part I don't believe it."[2] Apparently neither did the recipient. Donaldson hurried back from Mentmore to Edinburgh where he spent the first half of September. While at the Fruit and Flower Show he encountered a number of the Councillors and learned that the election to the Chair had become even more Byzantine. An election for the position of Provost was due in the near

1. Ibid: Ms 1001/181, Letter to Lord Rosebery, 1 October 1882.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6275, letter from Charles Cooper, 31 August 1882.

future and a measure of intimidation now further confused the wheeling and dealing. Knowing that Colston aspired to the position,"The Heritors told Colston that they would not vote for him as provost, if he voted for me, but the others told him that they would not vote for him if he voted against me."[1] With the unlucky Colston caught in this cleft stick, Donaldson again left Edinburgh, this time to stay at Haddo House in Aberdeenshire. His thoughts however remained in Edinburgh. "The election," he wrote to Rosebery on 25 September with understatement, "is getting a little mixed up with the question,of the Provostship."[2]

His optimism and confidence remained high, however, for The Courant kept its readers informed, with a mixture of speculation and fact, of developments and on Friday 22 September purported to have information which raised Donaldson's hopes; "There is some talk says a London correspondent, of most of the Edinburgh University candidates for the Greek Chair . . . withdrawing before the 25th inst in favour of Professor Donaldson of Aberdeen."[3] The Courant professed to know that Professor Jebb, who had the Greek Chair in Glasgow and against whom Donaldson had been an unsuccessful candidate in 1875, was "somewhat desirous that an Oxonion should receive the appointment. But", it confidently assured its readers, "the belief has become all but universal in scholastic circles that in order to give effect to the opinions of several leading members of the Government the Curators of Edinburgh will appoint Dr Donaldson."[4] Four days later The Courant had further news when

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/169, letter to Lord Rosebery, 15 September 1882.
2. Ibid: Ms 10013/176, letter to Lord Rosebery, 25 September 1882.
3. The Courant, 22 September 1882.
4. Ibid.

"The same indefatiguable correspondent gave us yesterday a new revelation of the Rosebery-Donaldson intrigue!"[1] This correspondent professed that he had good reason to believe that that week all the Curators of Edinburgh University would receive in print the reasons why the Home Office considered it in the interests of Scottish University reform that Donaldson should be appointed to the Chair. The Courant gave vent to righteous indignation. "This is surely carrying the joke a little too far," it protested, "Who made the Home Office a judge of Greek Professors? Who gave it authority to supersede the functions of the Council of Edinburgh?" This development, it claimed, raised "a very grave accusation against the members of the Government, who are thus alleged by their own actions to be abusing their power for the purpose of interfering with what they have nothing to do with."[2]

At this juncture Donaldson learned that William Geddes,[3] the Professor of Greek at Aberdeen, had declared himself a candidate, "and as he is an ardent Tory, they will try every means to damage me."[4] He was convinced that Geddes had been put up by the Tories in the expectation that he would attract the votes of those who favoured the appointment of a Scotsman."[5] At the end of September, Donaldson left Aberdeen,

1. Ibid: 26 September 1882.
2. Ibid.
3. William Duguid Geddes (1828-1900) had at the age of seventeen been a schoolmaster at Gamrie before becoming a master at Aberdeen Grammar School two years later. At twenty five he succeeded Melvin as Rector and at the early age of twenty seven was appointed Professor at King's College when Donaldson applied for the Rectorship. "For thirty years he shed lustre on the professoriate and established for his University a widespread reputation as a seat of Greek learning" before in 1885 he was appointed Principal of the University.
   Dictionary of National Biography.
4. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/180, Letter to Lord Rosebery, 27 September 1882.
5. Ibid.

where he
/ had spent a few days after his visit to Haddo, for Edinburgh in order to be there for the result of the election on 3 October. He was still trying to assess how the seven Curators would vote and decided that the three who were also Heritors were against him, three were for him and about the seventh he was unable to make up his mind. His placid front disguised his inner anxiety as he worried whether "the Heriot revenge" might yet be a reality after all. The hopes he had nursed through the summer were misplaced for when the result of the election was announced, it was not Donaldson the Curators had appointed but a much younger man, S.H. Butcher, whose path to Edinburgh had been through Cambridge and Oxford. It was now The Scotsman's turn to be outraged and it rose to the occasion the morning after Blackie's successor was announced. Its readers were assured that it was not against the appointment of men from English Universities to Scottish chairs when their qualifications made them the best qualified for the position but, where there were Scotsmen of equal or higher powers,

> "it is a monstrous injustice to a University and to Scotland that these Scottish scholars should be passed over because they are Scotsmen, and because they do not happen to possess the hallmark of one of the English Universities. Every Scotsman is plainly told, by such appointments as that of yesterday, that he cannot get anything worth having in Scottish Universities, or that whatever he may get there is worthless, until, and unless, it has been supplemented at Oxford . . . It seems almost as if the words "No Scotsman need apply" were to be added to announcements that Chairs in Scottish Universities are vacant . . . such a course can only tend to destroy the national character of Universities, to discourage Scottish scholarship, to disparage University teaching, and to bar the way to effective University reform." 1.

There was undeniably much truth in this allegation for it had been a grievance of Scottish scholars for a long time. The Scotsman, however, did not let its indignation rest there and in the second part of the

1. The Scotsman, 4 October 1882.

article moved from the general to the particular, stating in cold print what was widely known or suspected.

> "There is good reason for believing that a Scotsman was not chosen because of vindicative opposition to the one best suited for the post. It has been an open secret in Edinburgh for some weeks past that the leading spirits of the Heriot ring were doing all in their power to prevent the election of one of the candidates, because he had taken a more or less active part in the proceedings which led to the passing of the Educational Endowments Act. But it is unquestionable that they have boasted that they had secured the Town Councillors to vote against the candidate in question, and the chances of the candidate against whom they set themselves were gone. It is difficult to fathom the depth of petty vindictiveness that can use the opportunity of the discharge of a public duty for the gratification of private spite."1

Too late, Donaldson realised that he had seriously miscalculated the support he could command in Edinburgh and was forced to acknowledge that he "had secretly offended a considerable number of people". He immediately identified two reasons for this: he knew that he was widely "believed to have influenced The Scotsman a good deal and write most if not all its reviews . . . the other was that I was supposed to be the dispenser of your (Rosebery's) hospitality and favours. They imagined that I prevented them from being invited to your house or being introduced to you and that I was keeping all the friendship to myself."[2] The following month he discovered yet another cause. "There has been going on a dreadful controversy about me arising out of the Edinburgh Greek Chair election in the columns of the Nonconformist," he told Rosebery on 18 November. "It seem that the religious party in Edinburgh are dreadfully afraid of me. They have taken umbrage at me for presiding at Burns Dinners and praising actors like Irving.[3] Blackie might do

1. Ibid.
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 100113/198, letter to Lord Rosebery, 31 October 1882.
3. Sir Henry Irving (1838-1905) the first actor to be knighted, a belated acknowledgement that those who tread the boards might be respectable, he was famous for lavish productions and rôles with Ellen Terry.

that, if he likes as nobody cares what he may say or do, but I am a serious man and am therefore exercising a decided influence contrary to the ecclesiastical."[4]

Donaldson had apparently written articles for the Scotsman, where Charles Cooper supported the agitation for the creation of a Scottish Office and that he enjoyed a convivial social life was well known. What weight these carried in barring him from the chair is debatable but he was desperately anxious to give the impression that the outcome of the election did not matter to him. "The late election disclosed a new experience to me," and it cannot be doubted that this was indeed true, "which however rather amused me rather than vexed me . . . human nature is a very curious thing and its eccentricities interest me but do not distress me."[2] Despite such protestations, Donaldson was far from amused, for his pride and self esteem had suffered a rude shock - to be appointed to the chair had been almost an obsession for months as he shuttled between Aberdeen and Edinburgh to lobby and canvas and his correspondence at this time is filled with assessments and reassessments of whose votes he could count on.

The reasons which Donaldson enumerated as the causes of him not having been appointed no doubt had some substance but he was desperate to establish that he had lost because of the irrational, even ridiculous, ideas which people entertained. Yet what he persuaded himself were the causes were rather the effect of the widespread enmity which his friendship with Rosebery was engendering. Donaldson did not flaunt

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/205. Letter to Lord Rosebery, 18 November 1882.
2. Ibid: Ms 10013/198, letter to Lord Rosebery, 31 October 1882.

their relationship - he did not have to - but neither was he so insensitive as not to appreciate how it appeared to others, especially when it was well known that he and his son relayed the gossip they culled from professional and social encounters direct to Rosebery. "I shall send you" he had promised Rosebery, "every bit of news I get."[1] Indeed, he had received the previous year an obvious indication, if such were needed, of the extent of the influence with which he was credited when appointments were pending for both the Natural History Chair at Edinburgh and that which he himself now occupied at Aberdeen. "A number of gentlemen have come to me in connection with the Chairs now vacant," he had informed Rosebery on 20 November 1881. "I tell all that their business is to lay the best evidence they can before you, that you are sure to select him whom you deem to be the best man."[2]. Such a bland response, imbuing Rosebery as it did with the wisdom of Solomon, may have sounded perfectly reasonable and adequate to Donaldson but the fact that he was approached at all and pressed by several aspirants for an introduction to Rosebery should have alerted him to the risks attendant on the position in which he had placed himself. And the belief in his influence was not unfounded. Donaldson had given Rosebery advice about candidates for the Natural History Chair and what must those who approached him hopeful for the Aberdeen professorship have thought when Donaldson himself was appointed? "A notion seems to prevail in certain quarters," Blackie had begun a letter to Rosebery, on an unrelated matter, in June 1882, "that, if anything is to be said to Lord Rosebery, either Professor Donaldson, or Professor Blackie must say it."[3] If Blackie

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 1013/176, letter to Lord Rosebery, 27 September 1882.
2. Ibid: Ms 10013/110, letter to Lord Rosebery, 20 November 1881.
3. Ibid: Ms 10013/156, letter to Lord Rosebery, 30 June 1882.

could say this, even jocularly, it cannot have been less evident to Donaldson.

Rosebery's personality, too, contributed to the situation. Had he been more accessible, had providence, which had bestowed upon him so much, included in that bounty something of the common touch, the hazards of an exclusive friendship would have been to a large degree avoided but Rosebery exhibited an uneven, even unstable temperament, he seemed "to have desired at once the superiority of rank and the superiority of being superior to rank"[1]; he could be immensely charming and amusing when he felt inclined but he was equally capable of an hauteur which froze at a glance. Many envied Donaldson Rosebery's friendship, he entrée to his homes, the position of confidante, but envy quickly turned to jealousy and jealousy bred distrust and resentment.

1. E.T. Reynolds, The Man of Promise, Lord Rosebery (Lond., 1923), p.37.

# CHAPTER 9.

On the second day of 1882 the young Marie Corelli wrote artlessly to Donaldson, congratulating him "on what I suppose is promotion - but I think Edinburgh will miss you sadly."[1] Now, confronted with such evidence of the distrust, animosity and resentment his association with Rosebery had caused, Donaldson perhaps considered himself fortunate to be in Aberdeen; without doubt his pride was wounded but in the circumstances it would have been more humiliating to have remained in Edinburgh. Certainly he professed to be glad to be relieved of the burden of public duties and the active involvement in so many associations - ranging from music and antiquities to classical literature - which had made such demands on his time in Edinburgh. Yet there is nothing to confirm that he had found these as tedious as he now persuaded himself they had been, and after all, most of them had been totally voluntary commitments. Once freed form all these claims on his time he was left with ample opportunity to reflect.

Compared with Edinburgh, Aberdeen only offered a greatly reduced academic world, a geogaphical location which would make it much more difficult to maintain an active participation in educational reform and high political involvement, and whereas he had been the eminently respected and admired head of a prestigious school with the social position the Rectorship was accorded, he was now just one professor among a number. Of course, he had known all this before he accepted the appointment but he had done so believing that the Professorship

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Glasgow Papers, Box 14/9, letter from Marie Corelli to Principal Herkless, March 1915. Marie Corelli had been called Minnie Mackay when Donaldson first knew her; now, during a short singing career she was Rose Trevor before being metamorphosed into the novelist.

was a means to an end, the Greek Chair at Edinburgh. He had not moved to Aberdeen with the intention or expectation of being there permanently but as a judicious interim arrangement; circumstances which can be considered tolerable for a limited period may take on a very different aspect when suddenly there is the probability that they may be permanent. Aberdeen had been a carefully considered move and now all his plans had miscarried. We can only speculate on his inmost thoughts when the Edinburgh Chair eluded him; certainly his protestations about how happy he was were so excessive that one cannot but doubt that they sincerely reflected his true feelings. Indeed, they may have covered deeper emotions which he was anxious to conceal from other people and which he may not have fully acknowledged even to himself - regret that he had allowed himself to be tempted away from Edinburgh, remorse that he had not been more discreet about his friendship with Rosebery, more tactful with those jealous of the association and resentful of its known or suspected purposes and even perhaps contrition that in his confidence that he was right in the necessity of reforming the Hospitals he had not taken account of how damaging to himself could be the enmity he had raised among the Town Council. In the quietude of College Bounds he may well have reflected on the lines of Herodotus, whose writings he knew so well:-

> All arrogance will reap a harvest rich in tears.
> God calls men to a heavy reckoning for overweening pride.

* * *

Donaldson would have been less than human had he not felt profound disappointment but if at first Aberdeen was that cleft in the rock where he might weep unseen, it also had its compensations. In the thirty two years since, as a youth of nineteen, he had left this northern town where he was born and grew up he had always retained fond memories of years spent at the Grammar School and Marischal College and if, with nostalgia and the passage of time, his recollections had become more gilded the happiness they evoked was no less real. And his mother, to whom life had not been generous, was still alive. After being married to William Hannan for ten years, he had succumbed to consumption which ran its relentless course until in May 1861 he died in their home in Blackfriars Street leaving his fifty year old widow with three young children. Donaldson had distanced himself - as much emotionally and socially as geographically - from this second family of whom he had seen very little.[1] Now he had the consolation of being close to his mother in the evening of her life for her health had been declining as a result of the heart disease which had afflicted her for several years; in the late summer of 1885 she died at her home in Thistle Street.

As for the Edinburgh Chair, Donaldson was never one to repine for long for what was past and beyond his power to alter, especially when there were new challenges to attract and divert his attention. He had succeeded Professor John Black who had been appointed in 1868 when he was a school Inspector and it is not without either interest of relevance to consider the personality and professional ability of this predecessor.

1. Donaldson left no reference whatever to his mother or father from which his relations with them may be judged.

"He knew his strength and his defects, and he wisely made no pretence to finished or wider Latin Scholarship . . . he had not more than a popular and vague knowledge of Roman history, and beyond Arnold we do not think that his wishes ever learned to stray. Greek he had well nigh forgotten, and philology beyond Piele he did not possess." 1

Despite these not inconsiderable limitations as a teacher, Black had done much to endear himself to the students by promoting more friendly relationswith them; he would recognise and acknowledge his students on the street "which he alone did of the professoriate of his day."[2]

The new Professor, who academically was to be such a contrast to Black, gave his Inaugural Address on 1 November: whatever his feelings about being in Aberdeen he was resolved not to fail his old University but to contribute all he had to offer. His address was reported at length the following day and it is significant that of the four professors occupying their chairs for the first time, Donaldson's address was accorded by far the most extensive coverage, extending to almost four full columns. "I have come into your midst," he told the students, "with the resolution to devote whatever ability I have to the service of the University, with all might, to maintain the reputation of the Chair, and to promote, in every way, the well being of the students."[3] In his opening address, entitled Culture and Scholarship, Donaldson expounded his reasons for believing that Latin language and literature should be studied at Universities, that a knowledge and understanding of the history and writing of the Romans exhibited a great advantage over the study of the history of the students' own country. The history

1. The Fusion of 1860, a Record of the Centenary Celebrations and a History of the University of Aberdeen 1860-1960, (Edin., 1963), p.162.
2. Ibid.
3. Daily Free Press, Aberdeen, Thursday 2 November, 1882.

of our own country, and the questions which the present time brings before us, are of supreme importance to us, and at the bottom the only important ones, and an earnest study of them ought to be the crown and copestone of education in our Universities. But," he continued, "the questions which modern civilisation suggests are the most complicated which the mind of man can confront. Besides they are beset with bias, prejudice, and partisanship."[1] In contrast, the life of the Romans was simpler, their political problems less involved, their laws formulated for a less complex society and bias was slight. "You meet with no Whigism or Toryism, no Establishment or disestablishment, no Episcopalianism or Presbyterianism, almost none of the burning questions which divide our society into sections."[2] Yet such a comparison between a society in the distant past and that of his own day had an underlying irony. He may have believed those same prejudices which he discerned to be absent in Rome to have been responsible for him having been denied the chair he so coveted but had it not been for the Government being Liberal, for the wire pulling and influence of patronage, he would not have been appointed to the chair from which he was delivering this address.

Although Aberdeen University could not compare in either size or prestige with that of Edinburgh, Donaldson enjoyed the rôle of Professor and the greater freedom it afforded him, for the demands on his time were now very much less than those on the Rector of the High School. During the years he was in Aberdeen Donaldson became deeply involved in the question of the training of teachers. This was a subject in which he had been interested since his days at Stirling

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.

High School when he had become uncomfortably aware of how little he knew of teaching skills and methods, and which had been responsible for is resigning the Rectorship after only two years.

From the early sixties he had begun to write wide ranging articles on aspects of education and the training of teachers. He found a ready outlet for publicaton of these in the Museum and his editorials in the Educational News and never lost an opportunity to express his views on the subject before Commissions and in speeches. Addressing the EIS in about 1868 on the Burgh Schools of Scotland, he had this to say:

"Education of all things, requires practical experience, theoretical knowledge, an acquaintance with its history, and earnest knowledge in its power. And we cannot expect that our teaching in the Burgh Schools can be the highest unless there are teachers thoroughly trained for their work. The burgh school masters should go through a special course in which they would be taught better the principles and practice of education." 1

He conceded before a Royal Commission that experience had a lot to do with being a successful teacher but he believed that "experience without knowledge of the science of teaching" was of limited value.[2] Donaldson's view was that if teachers were properly trained they would not only be better teachers but, equally importantly, they would attract men and women into teaching because they wanted to be teachers; he had been particularly struck that almost every man he knew "who had gone into burgh school teaching had gone accidentally, or has been driven into it by chance. His heart may ultimately get into it, but

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Vol. I, p.22.
2. Colebrook Commission, 1st Report, 1873, p.200.

that is the accident of the case."[1] There is no suggestion that Donaldson considered himself an exception to the observation and it may even have been his own experience of how he became a teacher that drove the fact home to him.

Donaldson consistently condemned the training of teachers in training colleges. This was not just an educationalist's prejudice for he always supported his opposition with sound arguments. That training colleges enjoyed sole control of teacher training had an historical origin. When the 1872 Education Act transferred parish schools to the new local authorities (and the great majority of voluntary schools were freely handed over at the same time) a uniform and secular system of administration had been established but the training colleges - all of which were church colleges - had been, intentionally, omitted from the scope of the legislation. This was an anomalous situation but the churches had been so alarmed at there being no provision in the Bill to ensure religious education that the price of the colleges' support for the Act was an understanding that they would remain independent. All the Colleges[2] maintained a strong emphasis on the moral and religious supervision of the students, expressed in the most rigidly enforced rules and regulations about personal behaviour. Indeed in most of these colleges, so strictly separated where the men and women students, effectively they functioned as two administratively distinct colleges, in many, in order to avoid any risk of association between the sexes the men and women students - like children in many primary

1. Report of the Colebrooke Commission, 1st Report 1873, p.197.
2. Both the Free Church and the Established Church each had a college in Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh and in the latter was also the only college of the Episcopal Church.

schools - had two separate entrances. Donaldson was affronted by the inference that students subjected to such a regimen were as a result superior in character and he had no hesitation in asserting in 1911 that the average training college student was no better, either in morals or orthodoxy, than the average University student who had never known such restraints. However at no time did Donaldson oppose training colleges because of their church or denominational[1] connection and the degree of supervision enforced in them was by itself of no great consequences; if it could not be shown that students were any better for it, neither could it be shown that they were any worse. Donaldson could produce much weightier arguments.

Training for other professions - medicine, law and the church - was provided by the Universities and to Donaldson it was illogical that the education of teachers should not be provided in the same way, for the existing arrangement "tends to degrade the position of the teaching profession and to isolate it from the other professions."[2] That student teachers should be exposed to the wider intellectual environment of the Universities was one of his main arguments against their training being confined to training colleges. Further, Donaldson was convinced that the training of a teacher could easily, and obviously, be divided into two distinct parts, namely instruction in the practical skills and methods of teaching and education in the liberal arts which comprised by far the larger part of the two years' course at the training colleges. He believed strongly that teachers should receive the academic

1. Both the Free and Established Churches enrolled students of other denominations in their colleges, only the Episcopal church maintaining a definite bias for their own, as a result of which its students generally found it impossible to get teaching positions in Scotland.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 9/16, undated but evidently written during his years at Aberdeen.

part of training in a University where they would have the benefit of a wider choice of subjects and be required to meet a higher standard for he was never impressed by the academic standard of the training colleges. Once the University part of their training had been completed the students could go on to learn the techniques of teaching which Donaldson believed could not justify a course of more than a few months. For these reasons alone training colleges were anathema to him but what really outraged him most of all was that the colleges were financially favoured over the Universities by the Government providing bursaries for training college students. The availability of these bursaries induced student teachers to attend one of the training colleges rather than a University.[1]

Now, by the Code of 1873, selected students at the training colleges had been able to attend University classes for the wider terms; this had been considered an important innovation, since it afforded a number of student teachers the opportunity of some University education. Aberdeen University, however, was unable to participate in this scheme since, although the city had both a Free Church and an Established Church Training College, both were exclusively for women students. There was no provision in Aberdeen for men who wished to train as teachers. These circumstances had important consequences for the University -many young men from the north east who in former days would have gone to Aberdeen University now chose to enter one of the training

1. A feature of the training colleges was that there were a number of fee paying students, a category comprised solely of women. Donaldson ascribed this to the fact that all male students who could pay fees, without exception, chose to enrol at a University and he did not doubt that if the Universities were to admit women, those who were fee-paying students at the training colleges would similarly choose the Universities.

colleges, where they would receive a bursary, and combine this with University classes. Since the training colleges in Aberdeen would not enrol male students, such students were obliged to leave Aberdeen and go to Glasgow or Edinburgh. Aberdeen University was consequently deprived of an important source of students, and as a result was badly hit financially. The Universities indeed had an important financial interest in acquiring greater involvement in the training of teachers. The extent of the inequity in the funds provided by the Government for training colleges and Universities was easily demonstrated for when Donaldson was in Aberdeen the annual grant to the training colleges exceeded £26,000 while the four Universities between them received only £42,000.[1]

Donaldson duly proposed to the Senatus that the University undertake teacher training. The Senatus saw the advantages, both financial and in the increase in the number of students it might expect, and established a Committee, with Donaldson as the Convenor, to consider the matter and confer with the Education Department. Donaldson's plan - although the report was in the name of the Committee he was given the credit for the ideas it presented - was immediately attractive to the University for he advocated that the money then spent on the training colleges would be more beneficially spent in founding chairs in those subjects necessary for training teachers and which the Universities could not yet provide - such as Education,[2] History, Geography,

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 15/10, undated but evidently written during his years in Aberdeen.
2. Ibid: Chairs in Education had been founded in St Andrews and Edinburgh in 1876 but such was the opposition from the Training Colleges that the Government was persuaded not to carry out its intention of augmenting the original endowments. These were so small that the occupants had constant difficulty in making ends meet.

Music - additions which would benefit the community in general, not only intending teachers. The money would also be used for maintaining practising schools and providing for those aspects of teacher training which could not appropriately be provided by the University, with these schools being under the control of the University Court or the School Board of the district.[1] "To my astonishment," he wrote exultantly, "the Senatus were absolutely unanimous in approving my scheme. Most of them saw that it would put an end to the rule of the sects in education, but even the divinity professors did not oppose, though they said the churches might give us a little trouble."[2]

Donaldson was confident that his proposals were impervious to opposition from either the other Universities or the churches since the former "would find it impossible to claim the training of teachers, the churches would be in arms at once. But they can say nothing against our undertaking the work, as they have refused to set up male training colleges here."[3] To Donaldson and his colleagues at the University the arguments in favour were watertight. Others were also impressed: "your proposal seems to me an admirable one," enthused Craig Sellar who almost twenty years earlier had inspected the Royal High School for the Argyll Commission, "It gets over the difficulty or anomaly of a Denominational institution training national teachers: it supplies the substitute for the Denominational Training Colleges which is wanted: it opens the door for a reasonable endowment for the Universities by

1. Ibid.
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/29, letter to Lord Rosebery, 12 April 1884.
3. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/30, letter of Lord Rosebery, 11 May 1884.

the State; and it gives the teachers the highest education which they can get in Scotland."[1] However, in trying to persuade the Department there were other factors which Donaldson had not allowed for - the prejudice of individuals and the self interest of the Department itself. In May 1885, Donaldson, as part of a deputation from the University, went to the Education Department in London to submit their proposals to A.J. Mundella,[2] Vice President of the Privy Council. There, Principal Pirie generously told Mundella how indebted the University was to Donaldson for taking up the question of teacher training in Aberdeen.[3]

Yet, despite the force of the arguments presented, the Department ultimately rejected the University's request to participate in the training of teachers or that Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities[4] be involved to a greater extent that they were currently. The Department reiterated the reasons it had always advanced when there was any suggestion of them being involved in this area: the Universities, the

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 7281, letter from Craig Sellar, 14 August 1884.
   Alexander Craig Sellar (1835-90) after graduating from Balliol College, Oxford in 1859, joined the Scottish Bar in 1862. When Donaldson first met him he had been assistant Education Commissioner, being appointed to the position in 1864 after which he became Legal Secretary to the Lord Advocate (1870-74). He was Liberal MP for the Haddington Burghs (1882-85). In 1885 he was elected Member for Partick and joined the Liberal Unionists the following year, acting as Whip of this party until 1888.
2. A.J. Mundella (1825-97) was responsible for Scottish education from 1880-85 and in the Liberal Governments of 1886 and 1892-94 was President of the Board of Trade. Devoted to Gladstone he was greatly concerned with practical administrative efficiency.
3. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Vol. I, p.115, Daily Free Press (?) May 1885.
4. St Andrews was precluded from participating in teacher training since there was no training college in either St Andrews or Dundee.

Department claimed, would be unable to exercise adequate moral supervision, they were not equipped to provide practical training or instruction in essential subjects, and a University could not insist on religious instruction, given in all the training colleges but which it would be contrary to the traditions of the Universities to provide. Another reason weighing heavily with the Department, but which it did not express openly, was that if the Universities trained teachers, the standard of training colleges would be discredited.[1] The Department, however, could not totally ignore the fact that there was no provision for men to train in Aberdeen, especially when confronted with the drain of student teachers from the north east. Accordingly, it conceded that the two training colleges in Aberdeen should admit in future a limited number of male students[2]. This was very much less than Donaldson had hoped for, since it meant that not all the male student teachers would be able to remain in Aberdeen and did nothing about the inequality between the Government funds for training colleges and Universities but at least some men would be enabled to stay in Aberdeen and combine their teacher training at the colleges with classes at the University, to the latter's financial advantage.

1. M. Cruikshank, History of the Training of Teachers in Scotland, (Lond., 1970), p.99.

2. Although both the Free Church and Church of Scotland Colleges admitted men for the first time in 1887 the innovation did not prove the success for which Donaldson had hoped, largely due to the exceptionally large number of men enabled to enter Aberdeen University as a result of the Dick Bequest scheme operating in the three northeast counties, Nairn, Banff and Aberdeenshire. In 1894, a hundred girls applied for admission to an Aberdeen Training College compared with only twelve boys.
Helen Corr, "The Sexual Division of Labour in the Scottish Teaching Profession, 1872-1914", in Scottish Culture and Scottish Education, 1800-1980, Ed. W.M. Humes and H.M. Paterson, (Edin., 1983), p.144.

That Donaldson was unsuccessful in persuading the Department to accept and implement his proposals does not diminish the value of his ideas. The truth was that his recommendations on the training of teachers and the redistribution of the Government funds supplied to the colleges were eminently reasonable and well founded but they were too far ahead of the attitudes of the time, especially within the Education Department and the churches, which both regarded the Universities and the training colleges as having clearly demarcated areas of action, and a deeply needed and widely held conviction that the training of teachers was the exclusive responsibility of the training colleges.

During the four years he was in Aberdeen Donaldson took a prominent part in this movement for the Universities to have a greater involvement in the training of teachers. The part he played was such that he succeeded in antagonising prominent members of the Education Department and this was to have important repercussions. In 1885 the Scotch Education Department had become an independent Committee of the Privy Council with the chief political officer - the Vice-President - devolving on the Secretary of State for Scotland. Appointed as Secretary to this reorganised Department was a Scotsman, Henry Craik[1], an appointment which was immediately felt in the succeeding Codes. Although Donaldson supported many of the changes he introduced, Craik was resolutely opposed to any change in the system of teacher training and resisted any suggestion that the Universities should have a rôle in this, largely because

1. Henry Craik (1846-1927). Previously a Senior Examiner, in 1886, Craik was responsible for the abolition of "payment by result", which Donaldson had always deplored, in the lower classes and their complete disappearance after 1890 and partly abolished fees in that year.

he was convinced that the Department could not effectively supervise the work and conduct of student teachers in the Universities. As a result Donaldson and Craik were in the forefront of the opposing parties: Donaldson was irritated by what he saw as the obstinacy, narrowmindedness and short sighted outlook of Craik and the Department, while the latter regarded Donaldson as interfering - and persistently, too - in a matter that was none of his business.

The relationship between Donaldson and the officials of the Department was further exacerbated by the struggle over whether or not education should be brought under the control of the Scottish Secretary, when the position was established in 1885; Craik and the Department were strongly opposed to this being part of the Scottish Secretary's responsibilities and Donaldson as strongly a protagonist. And Donaldson had no doubt as to the reason for the Department's attitude. "The Scotsman is entirely right in saying that the opposition has come from the Education Department and is of a purely selfish nature,"[1] he assured Rosebery in March 1885. Donaldson's animosity towards Craik is evident in his account of the latter's activities over the summer while spending a month or two in Stonehaven. Craik, Donaldson alleged, had been "setting on all the inspectors to agitate (against education being under the control of the Scottish Secretary) and they have been working on the fears of the Schoolmasters very powerfully. They have also done their utmost with any school board with which they had influence: but their succcess here has been exceedingly small with the exception of Glasgow."[2]

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014 4/56, letter to Lord Rosebery, 20 March 1885.
2. Ibid.

Craik may have had little success in his campaign but the fact remained that Donaldson by his determination that the Universities should secure for themselves teacher training and his championing of the Scottish Secretary being entrusted with education had made an enemy of a powerful and influential man in the educational world in Scotland and of the Education Department in general.

In the same month that Donaldson had been expounding his proposals concerning teacher training to Mundella at the Education Department, May 1885, Lord Rosebery also received in London a deputation[1] from Aberdeen University. Rosebery was now First Commissioner of Works and the deputation was to urge the extension of University buildings at Aberdeen where he had been elected Rector in 1879. The deputation's reception by their former Lord Rector afforded another example of how Rosebery's unpredictable personality could so easily give grievous offence and alienate support. The Daily Free Press informed Aberdeen and beyond that the deputation "received at his lordship's hands, scant encouragement, and indeed but scant courtesy," and went on to make a damaging comparison. "Lord Rosebery's demeanour today was hardly of the courtly, affable young man who went to woo the students of Aberdeen five years ago, and ask them to make him their Lord Rector."[2] Five years earlier it had been in Rosebery's interest to please, and on such occasions he could charm to an exceptional degree but now his

1. The deputation was headed by Lord Aberdeen and it is most improbable that Donaldson was not a member since it can be assumed that the visit to Mudella and that to Rosebery were included in the same visit to London by the members of the University. Further, his friendship with Aberdeen, whom he may have been instrumental in arranging to head the deputation and with Rosebery, would have been highly persuasive reasons for his inclusion.
2. Daily Free Press, 19 May 1885.

reception of the delegation barely escaped being described as rude.[1] It is hardly surprising that something of the deep offence which Rosebery could give so effortlessly when he chose was at times transferred by association to the man who was known to be his intimate friend and confidant.

Donaldson's other important contribution at Aberdeen concerned the reform of the important bursary competitions. Up until this time the most important and deciding part of the bursary examinations was what was called "the version", the translation from English into Latin, and Donaldson, believing that an undue significance was attached to this, secured a widening of the form of the bursary competition; the latin version remained important but its time hallowed dominance of the examinaton was gone.

Donaldson's successful efforts to remove the tyranny of the Latin verion doubtless contributed to his popularity with the students but that, as at the High School, owed more to his personality. "A benignant smile constantly overspreads his good humoured face," a contemporary account records, "though, it is true, he does occasionally attempt to frown . . . He assumes a very free and easy sitting posture while lecturing, and stuffs his hands deep into the pockets of his nether garment, as if he expected to find there the key to the Old Etruscan language . . . He talks to his students like an ordinary mortal and not like one of the heroes or demi-gods of antiquity. We can approach

1. It is interesting to recall that one of the reasons Donaldson had put forward for Rosebery's election as Lord Rector at Edinburgh in 1879 was that no one was likely to be successful in obtaining grants from the Government for University buildings.

him like "children to a father", for he has always shown himself the friend and champion of our cause."[1] He was a man well liked by his students, helpful and friendly, human and decidedly not stand-offish, even presiding occasionally at the conversaziones of the Students' Temperance Society, although not himself a total abstainer.[2] At a time when most Professors were severe and dignified personages who believed that the proper place for students was a distant one, Donaldson was intent on breaking down the barriers between Professor and student.[3] But how students regard a Professor may bear little relation to the contribution he makes to the University since, generally, the criteria for assessment differ. Notwithstanding, it is surprising that a longer term perspective of Donaldson at Aberdeen decribes him shortly as "a popular if not an inspiring teacher."[4] What, one wonders, accounts for this faint praise, when so many of his pupils at the High School remembered all their lives how the Rector had brought to life his classes there? A partial explanation may be that during these years in Aberdeen his mind was often elsewhere.

Donaldson had considered one of the main attractions of the Chair was that it would provide him with six months each year free of commitments to pursue his literary interests; "I have the most ample opportunity of doing the kind of work I like and I am no longer harassed by the endless public duties." [5] Such had been his hope, yet in the

1. The Fusion of 1860, Ed. W.D. Simpson, (Edin., 1963) p.163. Quoted from Alma Mater, 1884.
2. A.S. Cook, Pen Sketches and Reminiscences of Sixty Years, (Aber., 1901), p.24.
3. Aurora Borealis Academica, 1860-1889, Various Authors, (Aber., 1899), p.302.
4. Ibid: p.162.
5. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/197, letter to Lord Rosebery, 18 October 1882.

four years he was to spend in Aberdeen, there is no evidence that he "wrote" anything at all, even for periodicals. Certainly, he took an active interest in teacher training but that can hardly account for his lack of literary output. After all, he had produced the Apostolic Fathers (and much else) when he was at the High School with substantially greater demands on his time and a young family at home. On the very day that he learned he was to be Principal at St Andrews he confessed to feeling "a general sense of freedom, I am relieved henceforth," he exulted, "from devotion to an immense number of petty details in scholarship . . ."[1] If he had found being Professor at Aberdeen less than wholly fulfilling, deep down his attitude may have been coloured by the circumstances which had brought him to the northernmost University and kept him there. He must have encountered just such petty details as he now complained of when at the High School and more numerous too but his life then had been very different.

The truth was that in Edinburgh the High School, educational reform and his writing were central to his life. Although this had begun to alter during the last two years there, after he met Rosebery, the change in the pattern of his life became much more pronounced after he moved to Aberdeen. The Professorship gave him status and an income but the orientation of his life markedly changed direction. He was now spending much of those free months in London and at country houses, for the upper class Liberal world, both its political and social life, had become his greatest interest and when in Aberdeen they occupied his mind.

1. Ibid: Ms 10014/80, Letter to Lord Rosebery, 28 February 1886.

In Edinburgh Donaldson had enjoyed the social life which the capital offered and in comparison Aberdeen seemed truly provincial. It was over thirty years since he had left his birthplace; after such a lapse of time there were no friendships to pick up and time as well as a geographic and social remove had distanced him from his relatives there. Consequently he was immensely grateful for the continuing friendship of a young couple he had met in Edinburgh and to whom he was now living much closer. The Earl and Countess of Aberdeen were ardent Liberals.

Aberdeen had become an Earl by accident - actually two, for as a third son he had little expectation of succeeding - and a Liberal by marriage. Although he had readily agreed to stand as a Tory candidate for East Aberdeenshire his political ideas had been quickly brought into line after he married, in 1877, Ishbel Marjoribanks, a daughter of Lord Tweedmouth, who combined a substantial fortune with resolute Liberal convictions. "It was only after his marriage to a Liberal zealot," the fifth Marquis of Aberdeen has written, "that he took to his knees before the awesome Mr Gladstone . . . The Liberal light had not yet come upon Johnnie with blinding force, for the Conservative Arthur Balfour was his best man."[1] But the conversion, when it came, was both total and lasting.

Donaldson had first met the Aberdeens in the late spring of 1881 when Aberdeen, largely at the instigation of Rosebery, was appointed Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly. At the Palace of Holyroodhouse, they were required to arrange a succession of dinners, receptions and other entertainments. Although socially accomplished and endowed with almost indomitable assurance they were totally at

1. Archie Gordon, (5th Marquis of Aberdeen and Temair), A Wild Flight of Gordons, (Lond., 1985), p. 180-181.

a loss to know who should be invited to the various functions, particularly since they had no knowledge of Edinburgh society. The Aberdeens took their responsibilities seriously; they were anxious to do the right thing and make a creditable performance - but how?

Ishbel's friend, Hannah Rosebery, suggested that Dr Donaldson of the High School would be a great help: on 17 May, Ishbel wrote inviting him to visit her at Holyrood. Donaldson had lived in Edinburgh now for a quarter of a century - he knew who were prominent in the law, education, the Church, civic affairs as well as business, he knew who was who and which people it would be appropriate for the High Commissioner to invite to the different events. In short, he had the answers to all the Aberdeens' problems and their gratitude was both immense and enduring. "I must repeat how grateful we are for your hints," Ishbel was writing to him only a week after their first meeting, "we shall try to carry them out as far as possible."[1] Whenever either of them had a problem, or was just uncertain what to do, a line would be dashed off to Donaldson. "Who can you recommend for purse bearer this year?" she asked him, "We want an ornamental man . . . a show man who knows Edinburgh and all the different sets and their feelings well."[2] And sometimes his guidance was needed more quickly than a reply by the return mail. "Now do you not think that the judges and their wives ought to be asked to this dinner," she enquired "as well as to the regular judicial dinner the following night. May I ask you

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 5603, letter from Lady Aberdeen, 23May 1881.
2. Ibid: Ms 5611, letter from Lady Aberdeen 9 May (1882?).

to telegraph your opinion as to this."[1] From such cries for help an important and lasting friendship developed.

Aberdeen was appointed High Commissioner for four consecutive years and Donaldson was always called on for help - "we intend to use your "fashionable list"[2] Ishbel confided to him the following year - even requesting that he address the invitations himself since he knew where everyone lived. He must have been gratified by the result of his efforts when he informed Rosebery that "Lord and Lady Aberdeen are doing the vice-regal business in great splendour and are acting munificently and graciously."[3] They were indeed, but this style of hospitality cost a great deal of money. Donaldson enjoyed contributing to the Aberdeens' success at Holyrood and even more attending the numerous functions, crowded with the haute monde to which he was invited. Doubtless unwittingly, Donaldson was also making a small contribution to their ultimate ruin for while sharing high ideals and a limitless enthusiasm for their political beliefs and good works, at the same the Aberdeens positively threw money around and their extravagant life-style, improvidence, impulsive spending and indiscriminate generosity carried them blithely along the road to financial ruin.

Donaldson's usefulness to the Aberdeens and their dependence on his advice continued after they left Holyrood and went home to Haddo House near Methlick, twenty miles north of Aberdeen. Both wrote him

1. Ibid: Ms 5612, letter from Lady Aberdeen, 18 May 1882.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 5612, letter from Lady Aberdeen, 18 May 1882.
3. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/149, letter to Lord Rosebery 1 June 1882.

frequently seeking his counsel on a wide range of subjects[1], repeatedly assuring him how much they valued his advice. "What do you think," Ishbel asked "of his (Aberdeen) taking the rise and growth in Scotland of municipal government as the text for the Freedom of the City Speech?"[2]. Donaldson assured her that this would be an "excellent" subject, adding that "The thought has suggested itself to me that Lord Aberdeen might find it a good opportunity to bring out definitely and pointedly that he has determined to devote himself to politics . . ."[3] His guidance in the political milieu was no less eagerly sought; could he "think of any leading Liberals in town and country whom it would be well to ask to meet Mr Gladstone?"[4] Of course he could: back came the names with concise reasons why they should invited.[5] The frequency of Aberdeen's letters equalled those of his wife, often dashed off to Donaldson during board meetings or rattling home in the train from Balmoral.

The numerous letters from this couple, their intimate tone and the eagerness they convey for his advice and guidance reveals a relationship strongly reminiscent of that between the young inexperienced Victoria and her first Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne. Their youth, enthusiasm and earnest dedication to Liberal and social causes appealed to Donaldson, as perhaps also did their transparent admiration. The Aberdeens, for their part, were just as captivated by Donaldson's unassuming manner and unfailing willingness to help, by his knowledge and almost it seemed, infallible advice.

1. Often advice was sought on enclosures which are now missing.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 5621, letter from Lady Aberdeen, 5 October 1883.
3. Haddo House Mss: NRA (Scot), Box 1/6, letter from Donaldson, 12 October 1883.
4. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 5634, letter from Lady Aberdeen, 9 September 1884.
5. Haddo House Mss: NRA (Scot), Box 1/6, letter from Donaldson to Lady Aberdeen, 10 October 1884.

Donaldson had first stayed at Haddo in October 1881 while he was still living in Edinburgh and now that he was in Aberdeen he was to be a frequent and warmly welcomed guest. Haddo had been built in 1732 by William Adam and was arguably his finest house. Its classic perfection, however, was wasted on Ishbel who soon after her marriage found an outlet for disposing of large sums of money on "improving" the house to make it more convenient for Victorian house parties, sparing no expense to refurnish the gracious rooms to provide the gemütlich comfort of the period.[1] The alterations complete, the generous hospitality of Haddo was now used to promote Liberal politics: its handsome rooms and splendid policies, the great beech and lime trees, the vision of long dead Gordons, were often the scene of Liberal gatherings. Donaldson was soon a regular guest at these house parties and Ishbel, anxious for him to stay as long as possible, worked out that he could catch a train on Monday morning from Methlick and be in Aberdeen in time for his first class at 10.00 o'clock. Donaldson, however, was always conscientious about the University and was not to be seduced from his responsibilities by the enticements of Haddo. "I have made up my mind very definitely not to absent myself from any hour of my class and not to go to my class out of sorts owing to my personal gratification," he explained, "and so that prevents me from staying over Sunday which I should like so much otherwise."[2] So during term, he had to content himself with Friday to Sunday[3] at Haddo but whether his visits were

1. These extensive alterations (they cannot today be described as improvements) began in 1881 and caused Ishbel to explain in her first invitation to Donaldson that she and Johnnie had been living in two rooms.
2. Haddo House Mss: NRA (Scot.), Box 1/6, letter to Lord Aberdeen, 17 January 1885.
3. The convention was to be invited from Friday to Monday; "weekend" was considered vulgar by the upper class and its use an immediate give-away that someone worked. In the U world every day was the same except that Sunday was generally distinguished by Divine Service.

long or short, he revelled in the company and the vie de luxe of a great house and both the Aberdeens always were overjoyed to have him stay. "It is such a gratification to us that you can speak as you do of your visit here," Aberdeen wrote to him on one occasion after Donaldson had left, "It is a real pleasure to see you in the house."[1]

Having been so enthuiastically taken up by the Aberdeens, with an open invitation to Haddo and their London House at 37 Grosvenor Square - the Aberdeens never did anything by halves - Donaldson was enabled to extend his connections in the upper class Liberal ambiance, where political and social life were closely entwined, which his friendship with the Roseberys had first opened to him. In the middle of September 1884 the Prime Minister and Mrs Gladstone were to stay at Haddo and Donaldson was invited to meet them.[2] "I shall be delighted to be with you while they (the Roseberys) are at Haddo and while Mr Gladstone is there. I consider it a very great honour to be invited . . ."[3] he assured Ishbel. Soon after, in January the following year, 1885, he was invited to meet the self made millionaire and staunch Liberal Mr Charles Tennant together with Mrs Tennant and their daughters.[4] Whereas the Aberdeens had declared their devotion to the Liberal leader when in 1883 they bestowed the name Gladstone on their second son, the Tennants were to forge the Liberal bond with matrimony. Later that year, Laura Tennant married Alfred Lyttleton, the Gladstones'

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 5688, Letter from Lord Aberdeen, 30 September 1884
2. Ibid: Ms 5633, letter from Lady Aberdeen, 25 August 1885.
3. Haddo house Mss: NRA (Scot), Box 1/6, letter to Lady Aberdeen, 29 August 1884.
4. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 5623, letter from Lady Aberdeen, 3 January 1885. Charles Tennant (1823-1906) was, on Gladstone's recommendation, created a baronet six months later.

nephew[1] - the relationship was closer to that of a son - while another daughter, always known as Margot, scceeded in making herself a social phenomenon before marrying in 1894 the widowed Henry Asquith.

Thus Donaldson became an intimate member of what may be called the Aberdeen Set, a group of prominent Liberals bound together not only by a shared political evangel, but also by close bonds of influence, patronage and consanguinity, and which was at the centre of Liberalism in Scotland in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Something of its importance may be gauged from it being the only group of its kind identified by I.G.C. Hutchinson in his comprehensive study of the political history of Scotland in this period. He writes that,

"much of the failure of radicalism to capture the Scottish Liberal party in the 1880s and 1890s may be ascribed to the influence of this group, and more especially to the extraordinary nexus of blood and marriage based on Lord Aberdeen. His wife was the sister of Marjoribanks; his daughter married John Sinclair, Bannerman's Scottish Whip, 1900-1905, and then Secretary of State for Scotland; his third son, Archie, was engaged to Violet, Asquith's daughter 2, but died before the marriage took place. The Aberdeen group provided a solid centre in Scottish Liberalism, balancing not just the radicals but also the Liberal Imperialist section of the 1890s." 3

While serious politics was the raison d'être of many of these gatherings at Haddo it is not to be imagined that they were in any way dull; the importance attached to conventions and manners made much

1. His mother, Catherine Gladstone's sister, had died following the birth of her twelfth child, whereupon the Gladstones adopted the family and loved them as their own. Laura died in childbirth two years later. His sister Lucy married Lord Frederick Cavendish whom Gladstone had appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1882, only to be murdered in Phoenix Park within hours of arriving in Dublin.
2. The daughter by his first wife, Helen. Violet subsequently married the dedicated Liberal, Sir Maurice Bonham-Carter and became the mother-in-law of another Liberal leader, Jo Grimond.
3. I.G.C. Hutchinson, A Political History of Scotland, 1800-1914 (Edin., 1986), p.161.

of these visits predictable but it was also an age when conversation was a practiced skill, honing minds with discussions on the social and political issues of the day, enlivened with wit and anecdote and not infrequent classical and literary allusions. "I do not know when I ever saw a company blend so happily together," Donaldson wrote to Ishbel on one occasion when he arrived home from Haddo in 1883, "and where all seemed to get the utmost pleasure from the time spent together."[1] Expressive of the enjoyment he found at Haddo is a poem he penned there - a felicitous turn of phrase was an appreciated accomplishment for wet afternoons in country houses - reflecting the more light hearted aspect of such gatherings, his evident pleasure in the company of attractive women and the exaggerated gallantry of this wealthy and leisured world:

> Though Autumn sere earth's rolling sphere
> Has flushed from green to gold
> And russet brown on every down
> Proclaims the year is old.
>
> Alas! the clouds, the passing floods
> Have wrapped us all in shadow
> But ladies' smiles and winsome wiles
> Shed sunshine aye at Haddo. 2

We can hear the gales of laughter and quick badinage that greeted Donaldson as he declaimed this jeu d'esprit in the drawing-room with its scent of malmaisons and crush of taffeta; great windows to the north framing Aberdeen's inheritance, the wide ancestral acres stretching as far as the eye could see.

1. Haddo Hse Mss: NRA (Scot) Box 1/6, letter to Lady Aberdeen, 1 October 1883.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 5/7, n.d.

Donaldson was also at this time a frequent guest at another Liberal ménage at Kinnaird Castle. This enormous Victorian pile, with the charm of a Nightingale approved infirmary, lying amidst its flat demesne on the eastern edge of the Montrose Basin, had been leased from Lord Southesk by Rosebery's adored sister, Connie and her husband, Lord Leconfield[1]. Connie Leconfield and Rosebery remained devoted to each other all their lives, an affinity which dated from his alienation as a young man from his mother, who had further exacerbated their strained relationship by opposing his marriage to a jewess. Connie's love for her brother was equalled by that which she had immediately extended to Hannah, to whom she was genuinely attached. Predictably, Rosebery and Hannah were often at Kinnaird and Connie would press Donaldson to join them whenever he could get away from Aberdeen. "We shall be so glad to see you whenever you can come," she wrote, "your room and your welcome are always ready."[2] But despite Connie's entreaties, Margaret Donaldson could never be persuaded to accompany her husband. When Donaldson went to Kinnaird, as to Haddo or Dalmeny or Mentmore, he went alone.

For Margaret the Promised Land lay on the distant bank of a spiritual Jordan but her husband already had found a world wherein milk and honey ever abundantly flowed. Yet a married man who spent much of his social life away from home, always en garçon, and whose affection for such women a Ishbel Aberdeen, Connie Leconfield and Hannah Rosebery was writ so large - and warmly reciprocated - might be thought to have exposed himself to innuendo and gossip. That no breath of scandal

1. Lady Constance Primrose (1846-1939) had in 1877 married Henry Wyndham, 2nd Baron Leconfield (1830-1901).
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 7471, letter from Lady Leconfield, 13 August (about 1885).

ever touched Donaldson may be largely attributed to the irreproachable sexual morality of this circle; if his marriage had been short in romance the romantic part of his nature had at last found an outlet in perfect safety for such loving friendships were wholly platonic and none of the parties ever wished it to be otherwise.

Aberdeen was not providing a political backwater after all. Donaldson and Rosebery maintained a frequent correspondence but living in Aberdeen meant that he was seen less often at Dalmeny than at Haddo. Also, Haddo was simply more fun, for the Aberdeens were intent on enjoying themselves and ensuring that those about them had a good time too; they were extroverted and very much a team and the atmosphere around them was relaxed and easy, very different from the Rosebery homes where Hannah was always in her husband's shadow and Rosebery might totally - and inexplicably - ignore guests and whose capacity for dramatic changes in personality created an underlying tension. The Aberdeens were warm hearted and accessible and although Donaldson was counted in their innermost circle and his advisory rôle could have been no secret, it never occasioned a word of resentment or jealousy. There could be no sharper contrast to the consequences of his friendship with Rosebery.

Politics for Donaldson during these years were not confined to the drawing room of Haddo or Dalmeny for he was actively involved on the local political scene in Aberdeen. The great issue of the early 1880s was an extension of the franchise for there had been no change since the Reform Act of 1867 and pressure had been resolutely mounting for many years to extend the vote to the agricultural worker. The convenient justification for delay was that any increase in the franchise

would necessitate a Redistribution Bill. Donaldson laid the blame for the delay squarely on the House of Lords and he was not shy about stating his political convictions on a platform. 'I think you will agree with me," he told a meeting in the summer of 1884, "that the people of this country have shown wonderful patience with the House of Lords. For fifty years each Liberal Government has had to endure the sure determined and irrational opposition of the majority of the House of Lords to every measure of progress and reform which has been proposed."[1] The House of Lords was likened to a stupid animal which had strayed,

> "in front of every Liberal train which has carried measures fraught with blessings to the vast masses of people. And what has happened? The drivers of the Liberal engine have had at great inconvenience to come out of the train and pull the beast by the tail out of the way of the engine. But the patience of the people is now exhausted, the Tory majority must be confined within limits so as not to be able to stray onto the line or they may find too late that the locomotive will not stop but rush on its triumphant course . . . Two millions of men are moving forward backed by the nation, and if the majority of the Lords stand in the way, loitering and obstructing the pathway, we must run them down." 2

Donaldson had a marked liking for the vie de richesse of the peerage but he did not allow their hospitality to deflect his views on the House of Lords. Rosebery's antipathy to the Lords was notorious - it even horrified the Queen - and would make it easy to represent Donaldson as little more than a Rosebery mouthpiece. That his views were largely based on received ideas is highly likely - there is no evidence of his ever being an original political thinker - but that these can

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 3/8. The Ms is undated but it is probably the speech referred to by Lord Aberdeen which would place it in September 1884. "Would you just remind me of the date of the Aberdeen Franchise Demonstration . . . I have heard it remarked that your speech was about the best of the day." St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 5687, letter from Lord Aberdeen 25 September 1884.
2. Ibid.

be traced solely to Rosebery would be a simplistic construction. Knowing that Rosebery's views were congruent with his own may have strengthened his conviction and encouraged him to speak out on the issue but it is most probable that his attitude was formed independently of Rosebery and pre-dated their friendship for it was a response widespread and deeply rooted among the Scottish people, founded on historical factors and the social structure of the country. Except in the south of Scotland where Norman penetration had introduced and established the principles of a feudal social structure, the landowners' concept of responsibility to their tenants had been essentially pateralistic rather than feudal. In the Highlands the abolition of heritable jurisdictions in 1747 had the effect of changing landowners from benevolent paternalists into often absentee landlords, primarily interested in maximising their rent roll. The close bond between landlord and tenant which had been such a distinctive feature of Highland society disappeared. This estrangement was further aggravated by changes brought about by economic factors, such as the clearances, which totally alienated tenantry from landlord, and the class structure which was a product of industrialisation, where the absence of a substantial middle class created a void between the upper and working classes. The virtual absence of such a middle class further resulted in the Tory Party being very weak in Scotland and since the Reform Act of 1832 Scotland had been overwhelmingly Liberal in its Parliamentary representation. Donaldson's attitude to the Lords was a response conditioned by social and economic events stretching back over more than a century. Indeed it must have been inevitable that Donaldson would absorb this orientation during his childhood in Aberdeen.

There is evidence however that his attitude to the Lords was less violent than his speech quoted above would lead one to believe. In August 1884 when the agitation over the Lords was at its height he had been invited to Dalmeny where the Prince of Wales[1] was also a guest. Donaldson found the Prince deeply interested in the agitation and concerned that it would endanger not only the Lords but the throne. "I think that the fears are groundless," Donaldson assured Ishbel after the visit, "but a great deal depends on the attitude that the Liberal peers and Liberal leaders take."[2] He believed that if the people were confronted with "dogged opposition" it was not unlikely that they would demand the abolition of both the Lords and the throne and he thought the opposition of the Tories had fostered this attitude. The prospect of social unrest still alarmed the upper class and Donaldson hastened to put Ishbel's mind at rest: "But the people are willing to be led by Mr Gladstone: and they had confidence in Lord Rosebery and your husband, and men of like stamp," he wrote comfortingly, "and it will be found in the end that they will save both Lords and throne.[3]

Rosebery did, indeed, still enjoy an enormous following in Scotland but since the early summer of the previous year, 1883, he had been out of office. He had accepted the Home Office with responsibility for Scottish affairs when Gladstone had given him to understand that the arrangement would be temporary until other arrangements were made for Scottish business. But as time passed with no sign of change on

1. "There were symptoms" Donaldson noted approvingly "that a change was coming over him as to his mode of life. He went to rest at a reasonable hour and spoke to Lord Rosebery of reading a book!" Haddo House Mss: NRA (Scot), letter to Lady Aberden 29 August 1884.
2. Ibid: It is not possible to determine whether the visit to Dalmeny was before or after he had given the speech above.
3. Haddo House Mss: NRA (Scot). Letter to Lady Rosebery, 29 August 1884.

the political horizon he increasingly became discontented and when, on 7 April 1883, Granville wrote to him that he was high on the list of peers thought worthy of advancement to the Cabinet his patience was exhausted. Then on 31 May there were complaints in the House about the absence of an Under Secretary at the Home Office. Rosebery was notoriously sensitive to anything approaching criticism and this afforded him the opportunity he had been looking for; on June 4, ostensibly on the grounds of the implied criticism levelled at him in the House, he resigned.

Rosebery's friendship had opened to Donaldson the Liberal homes of London and after he moved to Aberdeen, since the session ended in April, Donaldson began in 1883 the habit of spending some weeks in London in May and June, for the Season was both socially and politically attractive to him. On 2 June, two days before Rosebery's resignation, he called at Landsdowne House, the Roseberys' London[1] home to discover that Mrs Gladstone was in the boudoir with Hannah. He waited until they descended for lunch after which Hannah tactfully left him alone with Catherine Gladstone in the Library. Mrs Gladstone at once launched into the political situation - dominated by Rosebery's imminently expected resignation - and Donaldson, writing to Rosebery the same day, recounted that Mrs Gladstone told him her husband "looked on you as the man who should carry out his ideas in the future, that you possessed very great ability and that your time would certainly

1. This was the Roseberys' London home until 1889, leased from the Marquess of Lansdowne while he was Governor General of Canada and Viceroy of India.

come . . . She repeated that he was watching your career and preparing you for the great work that lay before you."[1]

Mrs Gladstone, going on to talk of Scottish affairs, said that Rosebery ought to have been satisfied with the Cabinet preparing a Scottish Bill. Donaldson countered by pointing out that there was no guarantee that Rosebery was to have control of Scottish affairs. "She said that was absolutely certain and that you and you alone were to have the entire control of all the Scotch business," Donaldson related to Rosebery, adding hopefully, "I trust the Cabinet meeting will do something satisfactory."[2]

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/12, letter to Lord Rosebery, 2 June 1883.
   Donaldson's encounters with Catherine Gladstone reveal a personality very different from that with which biographers have generally credited her. It has been written of her that "in spite of everything, she was not a good politician's wife. She was not interested in drawing room politics and so missed many opportunities to coax a straying sheep back to the party fold, or more important, to soothe those others whom William had unwittingly affronted . . ." From Donaldson's letters, she saw soothing ruffled feathers and salving wounded pride as an important part of her work for her husband.
   K. McLeod, The Wives of Downing Street, (Lond., 1976), p.141.
2. NLS: Rosebery Paper, Ms 10014/10, letter to Lord Rosebery, 2 June 1883. Although Catherine Gladstone overrated her political perception, there is no reason to doubt that Gladstone considered Rosebery his successor at this time, but his attitude in this regard became increasingly ambivalent. Early in 1886, Aberdeen wrote to Donaldson, from Dublin Castle, at the commencement of a six months Viceroyalty: "It is rather curious that a short time ago when Mr Gladstone was talking to Lady Aberdeen (as he always does now whenever he has an opportunity) he remarked that one thing weighed upon him heavily and that was that he could not see who was to follow him and take up the work. Ishbel immediately said Lord Rosebery". He replied "Ah" and meditated."
   St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 5702, letter from Lord Aberdeen, 28 February 1886.

Hope and trust sometimes need some assistance in achieving what is wished for and Donaldson now resolved to do what he could to secure Rosebery's inclusion in the Cabinet. For his continued exclusion from the Cabinet was Rosebery's real grievance; that anyone so relatively new to politics should be expected to serve something in the nature of an "apprenticeship" might be reasonable for other people but not for Rosebery who never doubted that his rank and prestige in Scotland entitled him to a seat in the Cabinet with responsibility for a Scottish Office. He had confidently anticipated being offered a Cabinet post when Gladstone had formed his Government four years before and that the offer had never been forthcoming had rankled ever since. So, following this tête-à-tête with Mrs Gladstone, Donaldson was impelled to write to the Prime Minister, setting out the reasons why he should invite Rosebery to join the Cabinet.

". . . it seems to me probable" he wrote, "that there is an aspect of the Scotch question - one too of great importance which has not been brought to your notice - It is a well known part of Scotch life and history that the aristocracy and the people stand wide apart from each other . . . the form which this antipathy is now assuming is a crusade against proprietorship in land and in a somewhat less degree against the possession of capital" 1

It was this distance between people and aristocracy which had been responsible for the widespread distrust and dislike in Scotland of the House of Lords. There was certainly resentment against proprietorship which was generally equated with the social injustices and inequality experienced by the working class - whether it amounted to a crusade is more doubtful - and for the time Donaldson's assessment

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/16, undated, but evidently written in early June 1883. Although the draft of a letter to Mr Gladstone, the letter actually sent would appear not to have differed in general content and expression.

of the situation in Scotland was remarkably perceptive. He then wrote of the great following that Rosebery enjoyed in Scotland and his exemplary character, even going so far as to play down his racing interests. Although Rosebery's days of heavy betting - and losses - were far behind him, his interest in racing and breeding had in no way diminished and delighted the racing world and Society. The sterner elements of the Liberal Party, however, regarding Gladstone's more aesthetic example as the ideal, always found it more difficult to accept as his successor a man so prominent in racing. Donaldson even had the effrontery to assure Gladstone that racing and breeding - Rosebery kept an important stud at The Durdans - meant nothing to him and that he would have no difficulty in giving them up. It is incredible that Donaldson expected Gladstone to believe this: far from having no difficulty in giving these up, he must have known that Rosebery would never have considered doing so. The Scottish nation, Donaldson assured Gladstone, recognized Rosebery as the representative of Gladstone's liberalism and he might accomplish the reconciliation of all classes in the community. "I may mention," Donaldson continued the paregyric, "that a thoughtful politician deeply interested in the working classes said to me that Lord Rosebery had saved Scotland from a revolution."[1] After stressing how admirably suited Rosebery was for this task of national reconciliation, Donaldson came to the point of his lengthy letter:

1. Ibid: Donaldson's "thoughtful politician" was Mrs William Geddes, the wife of the Professor of Greek at Aberdeen, whom Donaldson quoted to Rosebery as having written to him that "Lord Rosebery has saved the aristocracy and our country from revolution." NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/138, letter to Lord Rosebery, 17 March 1882. According to Donaldson, Mrs Geddes wrote this in a letter congratulating him on his appointment to the Chair in Aberdeen. Her letter is not preserved in the Donaldson Papers.

". . . there is one thing that seems essential for the proper discharge of this duty. He must be invested with the dignity and authority. The mass of aristocratic influence and dignity is on the Conservative side, and he must have some position that could counter balance this . . . I feel certain that no more valuable service could be rendered to Scotland than by placing him in the Cabinet and giving him control of Scotch affairs . . . he could render Scotland contented and peaceful for many a year to come. And in doing so what is he doing but carrying out your sentiments and your noble thoughts." 1.

Donaldson underestimated Gladstone who was much too experienced a politician to be told by a presumptious provincial professor how to run his Government and the country; the appeal and its heavy flattery failed to move him. The Prime Minister scrawled a reply from 10 Downing Street on 8 June, thanking Donaldson for his "interesting letter" and explaining that, "From an exterior point of view it appears simple even to the most intelligent observer (ridiculous to yourself) to meet a case of high personal distinction, and a strong Scotch feeling and desire, by an addition to the Cabinet" But Gladstone's obduracy was masked by gentle words: he assured Donaldson that in his mind and those of his colleagues in the cabinet there was "a cordial desire for the advancement of Lord Rosebery, and if to the Cabinet so much the better. there is perhaps no man of his age in either House whose political future is so asured, and this consideration will I hope qualify any regret you may naturally feel on the present occasion." [2]

Donaldson had met his match; Gladstone was to be neither cajoled nor threatened with dire consequences, his letter sought urgent action and met with careful and polite platitudes. Donaldson had told Gladstone that "no one knows that I have written this letter and it is

1. Ibid
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/14, Letter from W.E. Gladstone to James Donaldson, 8 June 1883. From the date of this letter, Donaldson's letter to Gladstone cannot have been written later than 6 June.

inspired solely by my desire to do good to my country" (Gladstone could have had no doubt who it was intended to benefit) but Rosebery knew of it immediately and asked Donaldson for a copy of the letter. Donaldson had kept only a draft which he sent to Rosebery - with the disingeneous comment that the version actually sent to Gladstone had been altered but without expanding on this which suggests that the final version differed little from the draft - with the request that Rosebery destroy it. "I felt very strongly for some time that Mr G. might not know all the circumstances of the case," Donaldson explained weakly, "as so much is concealed from him and besides I suspected that he had no accurate knowledge of what you could do in Scotland if full power was given to you . . . Mr G's letter seems to me proof that his objections to cabinet are founded on pure obstinacy and that no good reason can be given for his conduct. If I have said anything amiss", he ended contritely, "I am sure you will forgive me."

Rosebery certainly felt shabbily treated by Gladstone - and no doubt had enumerated his grievances to Donaldson - and with some justification for he had been assured when he entered office that the arrangements for Scottish administration would be reviewed; by the time Gladstone showed any inclination to do anything about it, Rosebery was totally disenchanted with office. Yet, even allowing for his disappointment, frustration and his view that Gladstone had been less than wholly honest with him, his period in office had revealed a fundamental weakness in coping with public life for his touchiness and inability to work

1. Ibid: Ms 10014/21, letter to Lord Rosebery, 10 June 1883. Rosebery did not destroy the draft as requested but carefully preserved it in an envelope on which he wrote "Professor Donaldson's communication to Mr Gladstone unauthorised by me; as to which when I learned of it I expressed as crossly as I could my strong disapprobation."

harmoniously with colleagues surprised, disconcerted and even irritated his friends. Rosebery knew that Donaldson's action had been motivated only by a desire to help him but his displeasure seems to have been unfeigned for there is no letter from Donaldson preserved in the Rosebery Papers between that on 10 June quoted above and 23 March the following spring.

Rosebery had had enough of politics for the time being and on 1 September he and Hannah left England on a journey which would take them round the world, travelling first to the United States then on to Australia and home by India, not arriving home until the spring of 1884. The tour was to have a lasting effect on Rosebery's concept of imperialism. Throughout the summer following his return to England, tentative offers were made to Rosebery to join the Government but he was difficult to satisfy and at odds with the Government, particularly over Egypt. Britain had important commercial as well as strategic interests there and had felt bound to intervene when the Egyptian economy came to the brink of collapse. Gladstone had committeed troops to Egypt as a necessary - but temporary - intervention to safeguard British interests in the region. Pledged to withdraw, he found that the economic and political instability of the country made this impossible. Confidence in the Government was shaken by military reverses and the Government divided over military involvement in a country in which Britain had no protectorate or defined position of authority.[1] By the early summer, when Donaldson was again in London to partake of the Season,

1. Technically Egypt and the Sudan were still part of the Ottoman Empire although this was in reality little more than a fiction.

the Government was in danger of distintegrating. Its collapse was thought imminent in the evening of 13 June when Donaldson set off for No. 10 Downing Street. Catherine Gladstone, always indifferent to the social obligations of her husbands' position and having no patience with etiquette of Society loathed dreary dinners and receptions, preferring instead to hold an informal At Home for personal friends. To such was Donaldson now invited. "Is there any political news tonight?" he anxiously asked the eldest Gladstone son as soon as he arrived. "No", was the reply, then, after a pregnant pause, "but we don't know how long we may be here."[1] Circulating among the other guests, Donaldson discovered that it was believed a large number of Liberals would "abandon Mr G if the Turks were asked to interfere in the Sudan and if the terms with the French were not satisfactory."[2] Even more interesting, as he wrote to Rosebery later that night, there was talk of a ministry being formed, of a temporary character and in the nature of a coalition "that could deal unfettered with the Egyptian question. "But," he added, "it is mere talk as far as I can see."[3]

This might only be talk at Mrs Gladstone's, the desperate speculation of the Party faithful when the Government clearly had its back to the wall, but Donaldson was immediately determined to do all in his power to make it a reality for a new ministry, regardless of whether a coalition or a temporary measure, offered the opportunity of accelerating Rosebery, not merely to the Cabinet, but to the premiership itself.

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/37, letter to Lord Rosebery, 13 June 1883.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

The Government was badly divided and in serious difficulties; Rosebery had not been a member of the Government for more than a year and had further distanced himself by being abroad for half that time - he had escaped being tainted by close association with a Government which it was widely believed had bungled the situation in Egypt and whose foreign policy was damaging Britain's prestige abroad. Besides, he was on terms of easy friendship with many prominent Tories and was one of the few Liberals who enjoyed the Queen's approval. Donaldson had no doubt that Rosebery was the prophet around whom a new ministry could be formed, one which would successfully lead Britain out of this Egyptian imbroglio and restore the country's standing abroad.

Pursuing this end, Donaldson resolved to call on Macdonald[1] of The Times whom he had met recently at that bastion of Liberalism, the Reform Club where after dinner, one by one the other members of the company had drifted away,[2] until Donaldson was left alone with Macdonald. His description to Rosebery of what followed leaves an interesting picture of Donaldson at work - urbane, deferential and, when it suited him, appearing innocent of the ways of the world but beneath this façade, astute, single mindedly directing the conversation exactly where he wanted it to go. "He (Macdonald) is inclined to be a little talkative and is proud of his long association with the Times . . . I said little but let him talk on as much as he felt inclined." Donaldson's letter to Rosebery the morning after reads like an intelligence report. Macdonald spoke of education, a natural topic meeting Donaldson for the

1. John Cameron Macdonald was manager of The Times from 1875 until his death in 1889. He had a long standing interest in politics, having been a Gallery Reporter until in 1852 he was invited, because of his knowledge of engineering, to assume control of the paper's printing machines and their development.
2. These included the Editor of The Times, George Earle Buckle.

first time and knowing of his interest in the subject but Donaldson controlled the drift of conversation to other topics, "I merely putting in a word to induce him to go on. I gathered from the general conversation and his special talk that Macdonald had a great deal to do with the Times and that Policy is not fixed . . ."[1]

Now on 17th June, less than a week after meeting Madconald for the first time Donaldson followed up this conversation at the Reform by calling on him at the Times office for "a political chat".[2] Macdonald confided that he thought it likely that Gladstone might be found in a minority when the Egyptian question came up in the House but that he did not think the country would accept any other leader than Gladstone. This was not what Donaldson wanted to hear but he was nothing if not persistent. "I spoke of the Tories and a coalition but he did not see how one or the other would work . . ." he informed Rosebery the same day, "I introduced your name several times at appropriate occasions and quite naturally - but he never said anything . . . of course I had to be very cautious . . . I gathered from other indications that he has more to do with the policy of the paper than the Editor."[3]

Rosebery would have guessed the purpose of Donaldson's visit to the Times for even if the latter had not told him of the rumours of creating a new ministry, it is unlikely that Rosebery would not have got wind of it from some other source. However Donaldson - perhaps remembering the smart rap on the knuckles he had received from Rosebery exactly a year ago when he had taken upon himself a similar mission, by post, to Gladstone - this time chose to expressly record his motives:

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, 10014/35, letter to Lord Rosebery, 11 June 1884
2. Ibid: Ms 10014/39, letter to Lord Rosebery, 17 June 1884.

"I have thought much during this crisis that you are the man who possesses the exact qualities required for a Prime Minister decision of action with the widest sympathies with the people. I don't say this to flatter or with any object but simply to state what I firmly believe . . . It was on my lips to mention it to Macdonald but I am sure the mention would have done no good but harm."1

Whether or not Rosebery had the exact qualities for a Prime Minister, this was not to be his hour for, although beset with difficulties and with dissension within his Cabinet, Gladstone succeeded in carrying on. Nor did he feel it either necessary or desirable to invite Rosebery to join the Government. But the Egyptian shambles went from bad to worse and as in a vortex Gladstone's Government was drawn inexorably into events which it could no longer control. Against his better judgement, but in the hope that it might improve the Government's popularity, he had sent Gordon to the Sudan; his misgivings proved justified for contrary to instructions, once in Khartoum Gordon decided to stay. On 2 February 1885, while Gordon was still invested by the Mahdi in Khartoum, Rosebery was offered the Foreign Office. Characteristically he asked time to consider - this or outright refusal was his invariable response to offers of office - and then accepted. Many men would have declined an invitation to join a beleagured government whose position was deteriorating so rapidly and whose days were clearly numbered yet these were the very factors which tilted the scales in his decision to accept. The Government was in trouble and he believed that if he could do anything to help now was the time: he persuaded himself that in the circumstances he was doing a service to the Liberal Party which outweighed any personal considerations.

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers Ms 10014̲41, letter to Lord Rosebery, 17 June 1884.

Donaldson must have felt some satisfaction that Rosebery was, at last, in the Cabinet, even if he had not been instrumental in achieving it and on 20 March wrote to congratulate him on the conduct of foreign affairs since he assumed office: ". . . one thing is very satisfactory to me. I have been exceedingly pleased with all that the Government have done since you entered the Cabinet" - the tone might well have thought patronising - "the attitude to Egypt is now firm without the least bluster. The Russian business has also been well managed."[1] There is no record of how the new Foreign Secretary received this critique of his conduct of the Foreign Office nor what he thought of the advice which followed: "I met last evening a gentleman who had been six years at Lake Nyasa. He urged very strongly that our Government should establish a Protectorate over these districts, to prevent the Portuguese advancing into them".[2] Perhaps, had Rosebery been at the helm of foreign affairs much earlier the Government's involvement in Egypt might have had a different, and happier, ending. As it was, by the time he became Foreign Secretary it was too late: the fall of Khartoum and the death of the mystic Gordon sounded the death knell of the Government yet it succeeded in tenaciously retaining office until the summer. By then Donaldson was back in London.

"I get a very large number of applications requesting me to use my influence with you for some purpose or other," he wrote to Rosebery from Woburn Place in early June, "I stave them off some way or other . . ."[3] If he found these tiresome, each was also a reassurance that

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/58, letter to Lord Rosebery, 30 March 1885.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid: Ms 10014/59, letter to Lord Rosebery, 7 June 1885.

he was a person of consequence, an intermediary with the great, and his supposed influence, too, had grown. It was not just academic positions which were sought for the requests now ranged from the Deputy Lieutenancy of Midlothian to a grant from the Royal Library Fund. His self esteem thus bolstered, Donaldson was enjoying a busy round of luncheons, dinners, receptions and soirées but still found time for "political chats" with Macdonald. "It struck me very forcibly while talking to Macdonald," he observed to Rosebery later that month, ". . . that he would feel very thankful for guidance from you if it could be given indirectly. He was very angry with Mr Chamberlain in the present crisis and would like to see influence counterbalanced among the Liberals."[1] For such a Tory paper as The Times to be seeking guidance from the Liberal Foreign Secretary was remarkable and may have had no foundation beyond Donaldson's wishful thinking but evidently he was willing to cast himself in the rôle of the go-between. The chance, however, was denied him for a few days later the Government resigned after an unsuccessful division.

Donaldson sensed a strong feeling among the Conservatives that in the next Parliament "they will be in a hopeless minority and without a programme and their hopes lie in the action of the moderate Liberals with whom they might wish to unite as against extreme men. They look to you (Rosebery) as the one man who can put matters right to the satisfacton of all moderate men."[2] But there was to be no election immediately for when the Liberals relinquished office at the end of June, Lord Salisbury formed a Tory caretaker Government until an election later in the year.

1. Ibid: Ms 10014/63, letter to Lord Rosebery, 21 June 1885.
2. Ibid.

# CHAPTER 10.

On 18 September 1885 Principal Shairp[1] of the United College, St Andrews, died at Ormasary, Argyll. From Donaldson's letters it is apparent that he and Shairp had an agreement whereby Donaldson would succeed the latter as Principal. (As will be revealed, this was not the only agreement concerning the Principalship). Now Shairp had upset these carefully laid plans by inconsiderately dying while the Tories were in office which occasioned Rosebery to express his irritation at this untimely demise. "There is no need for vexation," Donaldson replied, "At first when the Principal fell ill, I was annoyed. It seemd so complete a disturbance to all our plans. He was to have retired whenever the Liberals came in . . ."[2] Whether or not Rosebery had been a party to this arrangement is uncertain; he evidently knew of an agreement between Donaldson and Shairp about the Principalship but Donaldson's correspondence suggests that he did not know the details. However, the consequences of Shairp's death at this juncture were inescapable. "The inevitable has happened and there is no use murmuring . . ." Donaldson conceded with saintly resignation. "But it is extremely unlikely that the Tories should think of giving it to me and I have made up my mind that I am not to get it and do not think of it."[3]

This is a repetition of the feeings he expressed when he had failed to be appointed to the Greek Chair at Edinburgh four years earlier. Now he claimed that when Shairp died, every desire for St Andrews left him and had never returned.[4] That he had taken the trouble to ensure that the position would be his, it cannot readily be accepted that his interest in the Principalship atrophied either so suddenly or so

1. John Campbell Shairp (1819-1885) had been Principal since 1868.
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/71, letter to Lord Rosebery, 8 November 1885.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

totally, more especially as the plan cannot have been made very long before. Since Shairp was to resign when a Liberal Government returned to power, the arrangement must have been entered into during Salisbury's administration which had assumed office only three months before Shairp's death. Whatever Donaldson might say about defying fortune to vex him,[1] to be robbed of the position in this way was a great disappointment.

The Conservative Government resolved to waste no time in filling the vacant Principalship since the outcome of the election to be held in December was uncertain; if it was to be sure of a Conservative being appointed it would have to be arranged before the end of the year. The Government's choice for the appointment was a Theological Professor at St Andrews, Professor Birrell[2] who had performed some political services for the Conservatives. An undated manuscript in Donaldson's hand preserved in the Donaldson Papers records these events: "The Lord Advocate resolved at once to fill up the vacancy and to appoint a Theological Professor who had taken the most active part in securing his election to the parliamentary representation of the Universities of Edinburgh and St Andrews."[3] The Warrant for Birrell's appointment was duly prepared and required only the signature of the Queen - ever the shrewdest of observers - when another factor was raised in connection with the appointment. The Report of the 1876 Royal Commission had

1. Ibid.
2. John Birrell (1836-1901) had been appointed in 1863 to the Parish of Dunino, a few miles from St Andrews, which was in the gift of the United College. In 1871 he was appointed by the Crown to the Chair of Hebrew and Oriental Languages. He retained this position until his death "and proved himself a painstaking, broad minded and lucid teacher."
   Dictionary of National Biography, 2nd Supplement, Vol.I, (Lond., 1912), p.166.
3. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Vol. 14/20. Although undated it would appear to have been written in the early 1890s.

recommended that the dual Principalships should be abolished and that, as in the other Scottish Universities, St Andrews should only gave one Principal. Pursuant to this recommendation, the two Principals, Principal Tulloch[1] of St Mary's College and Principal Shairp of the United College, agreed between them that whoever survived the other would become Principal of the University. This arrangement was generally known in St Andrews, for the Citizen, a week after Shairp' death, noted that "With Principal Shairp's death the double Principalship at St Andrews will, it is understood, terminate, Dr Tulloch being left sole Principal."[2]

It appears, however, that this gentlemen's agreement between Tulloch and Shairp, having no de jure standing, was unknown to the Government. The steps in thwarting the appointment of Professor Birrell are described by Donaldson in two varying accounts. In March 1886 he told Rosebery:

"Notwithstanding this clear understanding (about the survivor Principal becoming the Principal), the Tories sent up the name of Professor Birrell for Shairp's place because he had gained some votes for the Lord Advocate. When Sir Henry Ponsonby saw the name, he at once remembered the claims of Tulloch and wrote to Dr Mitchell one of the Professors in St Andrews to inquire. Dr Mitchell wrote a letter in reply stating that he believed the appointment of Birrell would kill Tulloch and that it was also a violation of the understanding come to and he begged that his letter should be laid before the Queen. And then the Queen refused to sign." 3.

Preserved in the Donaldson Papers is another account in Donaldson's hand which although undated appears to have been written in the early 1890s. In this Donaldson recalled that:

1. John Tulloch (1823-1886) had been Principal since 1854. The Queen considered him a personal friend.
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/82, letter to Lord Rosebery, 4 March 1886. General Sir Henry Ponsonby (1815-1895) was Private Secretary to the Queen.
3. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Vol. 14/20.

"A theological Professor, Dr Mitchell, knowing the compact that had been made with Principal Tulloch wrote to Sir Henry Ponsonby, urging that the Queen should not sign without consulting Principal Tulloch, and the Queen adopted the advice." 1.

Whoever took the initiative, whether it was Ponsonby or Mitchell, is of no significant relevance beyond demonstrating that Tulloch had strong partisan support both in St Andrews and at Court for not only was Ponsonby alert to Tulloch's interests but the Queen herself had a high regard for him, frequently inviting him to preach during the Court's lengthy periods at Balmoral. Tulloch fully expected to be appointed Principal of the University and with an increase in salary. Thus, even before Donaldson's advent, feelings were running high in St Andrews: Tulloch believed he had a strong moral and de facto right to be sole Principal; Professor Birrell, also in St Mary's, was being nominated by the Government; and to exacerbate the situation further, Professor J. Bell Pettigrew announced his candidature, basing his claim on "a desire to give the claims of science in general a wider recognition than they at present received in St Andrews."[2]

Donaldson, meanwhile, accepted that the Principalship at St Andrews was not to be his and events in Aberdeen soon ousted St Andrews from the forefront of his mind. For on 3 November, only six weeks after Principal's Shairp's death, Principal Pirie of Aberdeen University died.[3] With his plans in regard to St Andrews miscarried, Donaldson's attention turned to the vacant Principalship on his own doorstep.

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Vl. 14/20.
2. St Andrews Citizen, 24 October 1885. Professor Pettigrew had the Chair of Anatomy at St Andrews.
3. William Robinson Pirie (1804-1885) had been Principal since 1876.

True, his Liberal politics and the Tory Government were as much against him being appointed there as in St Andrews but Donaldson was a Professor in the University and there were not the complications that had appeared in St Andrews. Donaldson realised that if he was to have any chance at all his candidature would have to be brought to the attention of the Secretary for Scotland, the Duke of Richmond.[1] So he promptly sought the help of the Aberdeens as to how this might best be achieved. "We have carefully talked over and considered the subject of your letter," Aberdeen replied on 20 November. "We feel clearly that the most available conservative for bringing the matter before the Duke would be L$^{d}$ Balfour - also that the best way of getting L$^{d}$ B. to act would be that Mrs Pirie, or her son, Professor Pirie should write to him mentioning the peculiar and special circumstances of the matter. And a better plan still would be that they should write direct to the Duke - one generally finds it best to go to headquarters. . .[2]" Unfortunately, Donaldson's letter has not been preserved - the Aberdeens were apparently as casual in preserving their correspondence as they were their finances - for it would undoubtedly have explained "the peculiar and special circumstances" which Donaldson had set out in favour of his appointment. He had probably written to Aberdeen with the expectation that he himself would offer to approach the Duke but if so, he was to be disappointed. "With regard to any personal action on my part," Aberdeen told him "I feel (& Ishbel also) that a letter

1. Charles, 6th Duke of Richmond and Lennox and 1st Duke of Gordon (1818-1903) was the first Secretary for Scotland (1885-66)
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 5700, letter from Lord Aberdeen 20 November 1885. Mrs Pirie was the late Principal's widow and Professor George Pirie, who had the Chair of Mathematics at Aberdeen, was his son.

from me to the Duke would so distinctly involve a risk of doing harm that it ought not to be incurred."[1]

The Aberdeens were ready to do all they could for their dear and admired friend and Donaldson was grateful. "Professor Pirie is naturally cautious in what he says," Donaldson replied "I don't wonder at it. It is rather a delicate business to speak on such a matter when a number of colleagues are in the field."[2] Donaldson also enlisted the help of Lord Leconfield, Rosebery's brother-in-law, who wrote to him from Petworth that he had written to the Duke embodying the substance of a letter Donaldson had sent him.[3] In the end, Donaldson's efforts to bring influence to bear to ensure his appointment were to no avail for before the end of the year his friend William Geddes, who had been Professor of Greek at Aberdeen since 1855, became Principal. 1885 was not proving a good year for Donaldson; there were only four Universities in Scotland, vacancies in the Principalships were very infrequent and now two of these had eluded him in a matter of months.[4]

Suddenly, fate intervened again. Firstly, in the election in December the Conservatives were defeated and Gladstone was able to form his third Liberal administration. No one had yet been appointed to the St Andrews Principalship, since the Conservative Government had fallen before the Queen could consult Tulloch. Now it seemed,

1. Ibid: There had in the past been a disagreement between Aberdeen and Richmond and, although again on friendly terms, Aberdeen did not feel inclined to prejudice the relationship by an approach on Donaldson's behalf.
2. Haddo Hse Mss: NRA (Scot) box 1/6, letter to Lord Aberdeen, 28 November 1885.
3. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 7484, letter from Lord Leconfield, 22 November 1885.
4. Remarkably, there is no reference to the Aberdeen Principalship in Donaldson's letters to Rosebery.

nothing stood between Tulloch and the appointment on which he had set his heart. Then, suddenly, on 13 February, Tulloch died at Torquay. Mitchell had predicted that Birrell's appointment would kill Tulloch who, although old and infirm, may well have had his days shortened still further by the trauma of the past few months.[1] In September the University had had two Principals - by the middle of February both were dead.

Donaldson's interest in St Andrews, which six months before he was claiming had completely evaporated, just as suddenly revived when Rosebery wrote to him at the beginning of the year about the Principalship of the United College. There now seemed to be a singularly propitious combination of circumstances in his favour for the position remained unfilled, there was again a Liberal Government which he could anticipate being receptive to Rosebery's influence and Principal Tulloch, whose supporters while he lived might have successfully foiled the appointment of another Principal in the University, was dead. Tulloch's demise, moreover, had an important consequence for the appointment of the Principal of the United College since, if that position were filled, as it was reasonable to believe it would be, before the Principalship of St Mary's, whoever was appointed to the former would at the very least become the senior Principal and in all probability would be Principal of the University. Donaldson, however, was not alone in centring his hopes on the United College, and indeed, the news of Tulloch's death had been like a green light in a patronage scramble.

1. When a few days later Tulloch was buried in St Andrews the Queen sent a wreath as token of her grief at the death of a man she regarded as personal friend.

The very day that Tulloch died Mrs Campbell, at her home Birnam, on the Scores, composed herself to write a letter. The wife of Professor Lewis Campbell, she did not merely believe that he should be appointed Principal but that the position was rightfully his. The conviction was not without foundation. Lewis Campbell had been born in Edinburgh in 1830 but although matriculating at Glasgow University he had secured the cachet of an Oxford graduate by moving to Balliol where he had been deeply influenced by Benjamin Jowett. Awarded a First Class Honours in Classics in 1853 he capped this by his election as a Fellow of Queens College, Oxford in 1855. He was ordained a priest in 1858 within the Church of England and that year presented to the living at Milford in Hampshire. This was to be his only active ministry in the Church for in 1863 he was appointed Professor of Greek at St Andrews. In the intervening years he had occupied the Chair with distinction; his eminence as a scholar and the prolific author of erudite books was to be recognized in 1894 with an Honorary Fellowship of Balliol.[1] Fanny Campbell's realistic and practical temperament efficiently complemented her husband's more nervous and excitable character.[2] His credentials might be impressive but merit alone could not be relied on to win the prize. If that were to be assured, influence must be rallied to her husband's cause.

So now with almost indecent alacrity - Tulloch had expired only at ten o'clock that morning and could have been barely cold - she wrote to her acquaintance, Mrs Liddell, whose husband Dean Liddell was Dean of Christ Church Oxford, had the reputation of exercising considerable

1. In 1892 he resigned the Chair on the grounds of ill health and retired to Alassio. There he built a house and in retirement engaged in literary labour with even greater vigour than before.
2. D.N.B.

authority in University affairs and, not least, enjoyed a long association with the Court[1]. In short he might influence no less a personage than the Queen.

After intimating that her husband was a candidate for the United College, Fanny Campbell felt it necessary to dispel any suspicion of disloyalty to Tulloch, explaining that "He had become so on finding that the grave state of Principal Tulloch's health had stood in the way of the union of the two offices in his favour as seems to have been the wish of the Queen."[1] (The Queen had been motivated by principle and the right of a friend and would never have allowed herself to be swayed by the state of Tulloch's health once apprised of his understanding with Shairp and that he anticipated being recognised as the sole Principal). Then she came to the point of her letter. "We believe that Lewis's appointment would be the best that could be made for the University . . . we are sure," she continued confidently, "that if you or the Dean can say a good word for him you will do so. If the Queen knew that Principal Tulloch would have approved of course it will make a great difference to her and we fully believe that he would have done so."[3] This fabrication was a bold as it was monstrous - for the appointment of anyone to the Principalship of the United College would have outraged Tulloch - this was no time for a faint heart. But although her claim that her husband's appointment would have been acceptable to Tulloch

1. Henry George Liddell (1811-1898), renowned Greek lexicographer, was Headmaster of Westminster School, before being appointed Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, retaining the position until 1891. He was Vice Chancellor of Oxford between 1870 and 1874. His association with the Court dated from 1846 when he became Domestic Chaplain to Prince Albert.
2. RAVic: Ms B37/16, Letter from Mrs Campbell to Mrs Liddell, 13 February 1886.
3. Ibid.

was now safe from the latter's earthly denial, it certainly would have failed to either impress or deceive Tulloch's Royal champion.

Alas for Professor Campbell, compared with Rosebery, Fanny was an amateur in manipulating patronage. Rosebery, however, on this occasion was not finding it all plain sailing: even the practised politician and well connected peer was encountering difficulties in ensuring that Donaldson was appointed for he had met with the opposition of the new Secretary of State for Scotland, Sir George Trevelyan, who nursed an animosity towards Rosebery. The origins of this are obscure although it had been apparent to Donaldson when he had been the Trevelyans' guest at their estate, Wallington, near Cambo in Northumberland the previous September and later at Haddo. During these house parties, Donaldson had been quick to detect the manoeuvrings for advancement when the Liberals should again form a Government. "When I was at Haddo, I saw a good deal of Trevelyan and he never spoke cordially of you," Donaldson informed Rosebery on 20 February on learning from him of his current difficulties. "He never said anything amiss but when mention was made of high office, he never mentioned you but thought Mr Chamberlain might be the premier and I wondered if he did not think that he himself might have a chance." To substantiate that this assessment of Trevelyan had not been coloured by what Rosebery had subsequently told him, he added, "I told Lady Rosebery of this and when the idea was suggested that he might be Scotch Secretary I asked if she were sure that he would be true to you. She said that she had no doubt of the matter, and so I thought when you

first wrote to me about the Principalship that I had been wrong."[1]

This letter of Rosebery to which Donaldson refers must have been written some time after the Liberal government had been formed following the Conservative defeat the previous December and evidently Rosebery had penned subsequent letters about the Principalship. From this is may be inferred that the Liberals intended to go ahead with appointing a principal to the United College, despite the Queen's indignation - something never to be lightly aroused - for this was while Tulloch was still living.

Donaldson was now sure that Trevelyan would endeavour to thwart Rosebery over his appointment from personal spite and that the permanent officials of the Scotch Education Department would do all they could to prevent the appointment of a Liberal. Foremost among these was Henry Craik who as Secretary of the newly reorganised Department Donaldson had alientated over the question of teacher training in Aberdeen and Francis Sandford,[2] the first Under Secretary for Scotland. "I feel pretty sure that both Sandford and Craik are playing a double game. Craik as far as I can gather revealed the secrets of his office and the contents of confidential letters to one of his inspectors here who repeated them to our Principal". Donaldson then edified Rosebery with a more serious indictment of Craik. "He is in communication with the Glasgow Herald. He writes in the Quarterly Review. And he filled every possible office in the Education Department with Tories with extraordinary speed and promised some of them future vacancies. . . "[3]

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/74, letter to Lord Rosebery, 20 February 1886.
2. Sir Francis Sandford (1824-1893) 1st and only Baron Sandford, Permanent Head of the Education Office in London 1870-1884 and Under Secretary for Scotland 1885-1887.
3. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/74, letter to Lord Rosebery, 20 February 1886.

That Rosebery should be left in no doubt that this political prejudice extended to Unversity appointments also, Donaldson recounted how the Greek Chair at Aberdeen, left vacant by the elevation of Geddes to the Principalship, had been filled. He assured Rosebery that the belief was widespread in Aberdeen that Sandford "had the principal hand in making the appointment to our Greek Chair an appointment which raised the indigation of the whole town." The claim of one candidate, William Ramsay, was considered "supereminent. But according to the people here Ramsay was a Liberal and Sandford was resolved not to appoint him." Donaldson credited Sandford and Professor Jebb[1] - who had been appointed to the Greek Chair at Glasgow when he had also been a candidate and whom he believed motivated by jealousy of Ramsay[2] with -/combining "to destroy Ramsay's chance and the other man was appointed before Ramsay could print his testimonials."[3] The Tories certainly had reason to be well pleased with their achievement for their appointee, John Harrower who occupied the Greek Chair for forty five years, was remembered as "an old Tory hating innovation."[4]

Donaldson was well aware that he had made enemies in the Scotch Education Department over his determination that the Universities should share in teacher training, that there was, in any case, a strong Tory bias within the Department and Trevelyan, for personal reasons,

1. Sir Richard Claverhouse Jebb, Professor of Greek at Glasgow until 1889 when he was appointed Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge.
2. Sir William Ramsay, appointed Professor of Humanity at Aberdeen in 1886 in succession to Donaldson which position he retained until 1911.
3. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/74, letter to Lord Rosebery, 20 February 1886.
4. The Fusion of 1860, Ed. W.D. Simpson, (Lond., (1963) p.159. The following year Harrower married Blanche Geddes, the only issue of the Principal and his predecessor in the Chair.

would oppose any nominee of Rosebery. But he also knew that whether or not the Principalship would ultimately be his depended on the strength of Rosebery's influence and it was consequently of the utmost importance that he should be left in no doubt as to the extent of the opposition ranged against him.

"I have no doubt," Donaldson warned him, "that Sandford and Craik will put on the blandest and most submissive face towards you and Trevelyan but will at the same time exert themselves to frustrate every genuine Liberal project or any election of a Liberal to an important post . . . I have no idea what has given Trevelyan this twist in regard to you . . . In the matter of the Principalship it would be important that you should get your own way and this would be a lesson both to Trevelyan and the permanent officials." 1.

Rosebery was caught in a feud. His winning over the Principalship would, as Donaldson pointed out, cut Trevelyan and the Education Department Officials down to size but more importantly, as far as Donaldson was concerned, it meant that the position would be his. It was therefore strikingly fatuous of him to abjure Rosebery not to consider him. "If it is best to withdraw my name let it be withdrawn. I am not anxious about the matter."[2] To profess disinterest at this juncture might be politic but it was neither sincere nor meant to be convincing: had he believed that there was any real possiblity of his candidature being withdrawn it would have been inconsistent to strive his utmost to buttress Rosebery's resolve to hold out against Trevelyan - if Rosebery were to get his own way as Donaldson urged, then the latter would have to get the Principalship. Donaldson, however, had total confidence that Rosebery would not abandon him, that indeed he could not, for Rosebery now had much more at stake than an appointment coveted by

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/74, letter to Rose Rosebery 20 February 1886.
2. Ibid.

a friend - to be seen to have been defeated by Trevelyan and mere officials would be an intolerable humilation and hurt to his pride too grievous to contemplate. Rosebery's patrician pride was Donaldson's guarantee of his patron's fidelity.

Donaldson's warning letter had been prompted by the receipt of a letter from Charles Cooper, written the previous day, February 19, from The Scotsman Office, in Cockburn Street, Edinburgh. Cooper had confided that he was sure there was "grave cause for dissatisfaction" with the Scottish Office. "It is crammed with Tories," he wrote, "and I hear that Trevelyan had been induced to talk of making his appointments non-political. That is absurd. It simply means that the Tories are to get their appointments and ours also."[1] This alarming news heightened Donaldson's fears for he was confronted with mounting evidence of the extent of the hostility ranged, perhaps concerted, against both himself and Rosebery - notwithstanding that the Liberals were in power, it was just possible that against this opposition Rosebery's influence might not after all prevail and the Principalship of the United College elude him irretrievably. In the light of this cold realisation his gaze fell on St Mary's college. Apparently he wrote Cooper of his interest in the Principalship there almost immediately he learned of the vacancy for Cooper replied on 19 February, six days after Tulloch died. He was greatly surprised: it had never occurred to him that his friend would have thought of taking this position since it was understood to be so poorly paid as only to be tolerable with the addition of the Divinity Chair, also vacant since Tulloch's demise and for which Donaldson being outside the Established Church was ineligible. However,

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6287, letter from Charles Cooper, 19 February 1886.

if he thought the position worth having, Cooper assured Donaldson that he would do all he could for him[1]. The truth was that Cooper needed no encouragement and was only too glad to direct his influence for the benefit of his friend for he had a finger in every Scottish appointment, including University Chairs.[2] "I have thought it best to write to Trevelyan" he reported only two days later, "pointing out the importance of having back-boned Liberals at the head of our Universities. I have told him that the Tory theory that Liberalism is not compatible with culture is disproved in your case, and more to the same effect."[3]

Others had been equally quick to concern themselves with the vacancy at St Mary's. The Queen, content to remain couchant about the Principalship of the United college until alerted by the ever vigilant Ponsonby to the threatened affront to Principal Tulloch, immediately assumed a much more energetic part in finding a worthy successor to her friend. She speedily wrote to Argyll[4] at Inveraray Castle - that he was a friend and connection by marriage probably carried more weight than his position as Chancellor of St Andrews University[5] - seeking his opinion of Donaldson and such other possible candidates as he might suggest. The Duke pondered these matters on the shore of Loch Fyne before replying on 24 February. "I do indeed agree with Yr Majesty," he began in a

1. Ibid.
2. The Glorious Privilege, The History of The Scotsman, (Edin., 1967). (Various Authors). Cooper's influence on appointments ranged from University Chairs to judgeships and particularly in the selection of Liberal candidates.
3. St Andrews U.L: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6288, letter from Charles Cooper, 21 February 1886.
4. Regrettably the Queen's letter cannot be found in the Inveraray Archive. It must, however have been written within a few days of Tulloch's death.
5. The Queen's fourth daughter, Pss Louise, had married in 1870 Argyll's son, the Marquess of Lorne, later 9th Duke.

tone of sympathetic condolence, "that the loss of Principal Tulloch is irreparable"[1] However, someone had to be found for the position and he had that morning discussed several names with "a friend of mine here who has a wide acquaintance with that class. From him I hear that Professor Donaldson, whom Yr Majesty names as one spoken of, is a man of distinction and ability."[2] Argyll felt constrained to point out that he doubted whether any of those he wrote of would accept the appointment and for the same reason as Cooper had been startled at Donaldson's interest in the position. "Yr Majesty knows" Argyll explained, "that the salary of the Principal is very small and that Principal Tulloch was very poor. In fact I fear he was overworked by the need of writing constantly to be able to support his position and his family."[3] Surprisingly, there is no reference in Donaldson letters to Rosebery of the Principalship of St Mary's College which suggests that he knew nothing of Donaldson's interest in the position and that the latter was engaged in something of a double game, having Rosebery push exclusively for his appointment to the United College and Cooper working for his appointment to St Mary's should the former fail. How Donaldson would have fared in the competition for the Principalship of St Mary's must remain speculation for while the Queen and Argyll were exercising themselves over this, unbeknown to them, the Principalship of the United College was being decided. On February 28, only four days after Argyll had written to the Queen about Donaldson's suitability for St Mary's and only a fortnight after Tulloch's death, Donaldson learned from Rosebery that he was, after all, to be appointed Principal of the United College. If he gave Cooper any credit for

1. RAVic: Ms D13/29[c]. Letter from the Duke of Argyll to the Queen, 24 February 1886.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

the outcome he never conceded such to Rosebery, to whose influence alone he had no hesitation in attributing the appointment. "It may not in this case be direct but there is such a thing as reflex influence and I have not doubt that your reflex influence has been powerful," he replied the same day with one of his by now familiar testimonies of unqualified devotion and effulgent gratitude. "Of all the things connected with the Principalship nothing can give me anything like the pleasure which the experience of your warm friendship gives me and I need not say that my heart is bound more closely to you, if that is possible."[1]

Donaldson could now relax in the knowledge that the position was definitely his although discretion was called for until the appointment was officially announced. Yet it is surprising that writing the following day to those devoted friends the Aberdeens, whose influence he had not been slow to commandeer in connection with the Principalship at Aberdeen, he told them that the St Andrews Principalship was an office "in which I should take great delight" adding, "The matter is not yet settled and it is possible that I may get it."[2] If Paris was worth a mass, a Principalship was apparently worth a brazen lie. Evidently, he rated the Aberdeen's hospitality, their good-time house parties and the introductions their friendship had effected, above their prudence but they cannot have been without suspicions for on 2 March, before receiving Donaldson's letter, the Aberdeen Journal carried a paragraph from its London Correspondent, announcing that:

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms. 10014/80, letter to Lord Rosebery, 28 February 1886. Donaldson was still expressing his gratitude in early April, by which time "I have become conscious how great is the blessing that has fallen to my lot . . . I feel that I owe all this to you." Ibid: Ms 10014/92, letter to Lord Rosebery, 3 April 1886.
2. Haddo House Mss: NRA (Scot.), Box 3/6, letter to Lord Aberdeen, 4 March 1886.

"It is reported in well informed quarters that the name of Dr Donaldson, of Aberdeen, has been sent to the Queen for the Principalship of the University of St Andrews. The name of Professor Birrell has also been mentioned, and had the Tories been in office, he would undoubtedly have had the place." 1.

It appears that only now did Rosebery learn of the agreement about the surviving Principal succeeding as Principal of the University for Donaldson hastily wrote explaining what had happened betweeen the Queen, Ponsonby and Professor Mitchell. Donaldson may have had a horrible feeling that what had appeared certain only a few days before might even yet be denied him and suggested what Rosebery might do. "The Queen may still wish to know that there is now no obstacle in the way, he remarked." Principal Tulloch being raised to glory had removed the former obstacle and Rosebery, alone among the Liberal Ministers, was persona grata at Court. Anything the Queen had any wish to know she would have had no hesitation in discovering on her own initiative; what Donaldson wished was that Rosebery should convince the Queen that there was no impediment to his appointment.[2] "Of course I have told no one" he assured Rosebery, but since "The story I have told was got from Dr Mitchell by Milligan", Mitchell's involvement must have been an open secret around St Andrews. Donaldson was decidedly anxious, and not only on account of the Queen; "I am not sure that the Scotch Office can be trusted,"[3] he concluded pointedly. His fears were laid to rest on 8 March when his appointment was officially announced. "I am exceedingly glad to have the honour of making such an appointment,"[4]

1. Aberdeen Journal, 2 March 1886.
2. The Queen did not sign the Warrant appointing Donaldson until 11 March but the delay was more likely occasioned by the time required to prepare the document rather than hesitancy on the part of Her Majesty.
3. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/82, letter to Lord Rosebery, 4 March 1886.
4. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, letter from Sir George Trevelyan 11 March 1886.

Trevelyan as Secretary for Scotland wrote with that insincerity - for such Donaldson knew it to be - which is the foundation of good manners.

On March 13, The Citizen edified its readers in St Andrews by printing the response of the prominent papers. The Scotsman, predictably, was approving if restrained. "The appointment is one that will be welcomed by all Scotsmen who think that Scottish scholarship should be fitly recognised," it opined and blandly continued "here in Edinburgh there will be great satisfaction. His learning, his courtesy, his social qualities, his sturdy principles have all commended him to men of every rank and party . . ." Charles Cooper could be relied on to comment favourably on any Liberal appointment but the response of the press elsewhere was very different and in unqualified and forthright language expressed the anger this appointment had aroused. "The gross job which we hoped . . . might still be averted had been perpetrated" the Glasgow Herald began a squalid onslaught of unrelieved condemnation:

"Our Scottish Secretary, Mr Trevelyan, has permitted himself to be overborne - we cannot doubt against his own better judgment - and has consented to install Lord Rosebery's nominee in the position of Principal of the University of St Andrews. So far as is known, no consideration has been given to the claims of any other candidate. No attempt has been made to ascertain or consider the wishes on the subject of those most competent to speak on behalf of the University, and most interested in her welfare. Dr Donaldson has been persistently run, in return for the same services, and by the same backer, for every eligible academical and educational appointment open to him during the past five years; and now that the backer was in power, the result was inevitable . . . He has for three years been Professor of Latin at Aberdeen; those who know Aberdeen know that he has not done anything in that position to increase his claims to the post now bestowed upon him. He has been named Principal of a University with which he has no connection simply and solely because he has been able to do useful work for Lord Rosebery. It is for this reason he has been kept in reserved to be foisted into the first important and desirable post that might become vacant, without consideration of any other claims, and it is for this reason that we denounce the appointment as a job

of the closest kind. The appointment has been made with a cynical disregard for the qualifications especially needed for the post, to the just expection of local opinion, and to the incontestably superior claims of other candidates." 1

The Guardian was just as damning, claiming as a preamble that Scotland had recently been given a Secretary of State,

". . . for the express purpose of representing with greater dignity matters which affect Scottish interests in the Government and for the dispensation of Scottish patronage with a single eye to the benefit of Scotland. Mr Trevelyan is the first Liberal tenant of the office, and he has just made his first important appointment; but we fear it will win no credit for him or for the Secretaryship, in Scotland or anywhere else . . . While the Conservatives were in office St Andrews was in terror of a political nomination - in other words of a party job. The Liberals have come in, and impartial opinion in Scotland is forced with shame to admit that their appointment is open to the same suspicion." 2.

While acknowledging that St Andrews was the smallest of the Scottish Universities, The Guardian was anxious to point out that it had many distinguished Professors including "more than one professor of the highest distinction." Attention was drawn to the fact that in the selection of the new Principal all these had been passed over and the post given to "a gentleman of whom it may without disrespect be said that his reputation is as much inferior as his academic experience is less . . . his appointment is generally attributed to the influence of Lord Rosebery, whose political friend and associate he has been.[3]

1. The Glasgow Herald, quoted in The Citizen, 13 March 1886. Accuracy appears to have been the victim of the paper's indignation for, with the exception of the Principalship at Aberdeen, there is no evidence that Donaldson was interested in any other position during his years in Aberdeen.
2. The Guardian, ibid.
3. Ibid.

The local outrage was so great that on 22 March, the Liberal member for East Fife, Mr Boyd-Kinnear, rose in the House to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether it was true, as stated in the newspapers, that Donaldson had been appointed "and if it is true, whether he will state the grounds on which a stranger to the University has been appointed over the head of candidates connected with it?"[1] Trevelyan confirmed that Donaldson had indeed been appointed "on the ground that he is a very learned man, of varied experience in teaching who holds very enlightened views on University education" - at which point Lord Randolph Churchill[2] interrupted, shouting Hear Hear - "While duly appreciating the qualifications of other candidates, I came to the conclusion that he was the best man for the position. I am not aware that there is any usage of appointing Professors to the Principalship of the University to which they are connected."[3]

Boyd-Kinnear, in placing the emphasis of his question on the appointee having no association with St Andrews enabled Trevelyan to sidestep the real causes of grievance, a point the Daily Free Press in Aberdeen was happy to overlook. A staunchly Liberal paper, it reported the following morning with unconcealed satisfaction that, "the very neat and effective reply of Mr Trevelyan to Mr Boyd-Kinnear's rather sinister and ill considered queston will, let us hope, satisfy the members of certain disappointed and angry coteries that not very much is to be

1. Hansard, 1886, Vol. 303, p.1496.
2. Lord Randolph had no personal interest in the matter. In a political miscalculation which destroyed his career, he had resigned as Chancellor of the Exchequer the previous December since when his tactics were to increasingly harrass and disrupt the Government. There is no indication that he knew Donaldson personally but he knew of him since his sister, Lady Fanny Spencer-Churchill had married in 1873 Lady Aberdeen's brother, Edward Marjoribanks, later 2nd Baron Tweedmouth.
3. Hansard, 1886, Vol. 303, p.1496.

gained by their spiteful attack on Dr Donaldson."[4] Totally overlooking the political implications and choosing not to concern itself with allegations of impropriety, the Daily Free Press announced that Donaldson's achievements completely vindicated his appointment. "His 'advanced' views have earned him the ill will of the Glasgow Professoriate" - the paper apparently felt it necessary to explain the uproar - "as he would have the status of that University considerably heightened, it at present taking in students at every stage, even with an entire ignorance of Latin and Greek," adding fatuously for readers who yet might retain doubts, "This explains the hostility to his recent appointment."[2]

The Herald's assertion that St Andrews had been in terror of a political appointment was an exaggeration - what the University opposed was the Principalship of the United College being filled at all. Soon after Shairp's death, all the Professors of the College, with one exception, memoralised the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Duke of Richmond, not to fill the office of Principal "as the abolition of the double principalship was recommended by the late University Commission, and as a provision to this effect was part of the Universities (Scotland) Bill introduced by the late Government, and virtually adopted by the present administration.[3]

One further point emerges. Shairp had agreed with Tulloch that the survivor would become the sole Principal of the University; in other words, when one of them died, there would be no Principalship to fill. Knowing this, why did he agree with Donaldson to resign at

1. Daily Free Press, 23 March 1866.
2. Ibid.
3. The Citizen, 31 October 1885.

a time which would facilitate the latter being appointed? If Shairp was acting in good faith with Donaldson, he must have been deceiving Tulloch. And similarly, since Donaldson evidently knew of the agreement between the two Principals when he made his arrangement with Shairp, he must have believed that that between the Principals would not be fulfilled. An element of duplicity in Shairp's dealings is inescapable.

The Liberal Government appointed Donaldson to the Principalship of the United College on the understanding that he would become sole Principal by the provisions of its Universities Bill. Since a Chair of Theology was attached to the Principalship of St Mary's it was deemed expedient to fill the vacancy but in the Warrant the condition was imposed that the Commissioners might separate the Chair from the Principalship, abolish the latter and dispose of its emoluments. When Principal Cunningham was appointed Principal of St Mary's in succession to Tulloch, he agreed to these conditions in correspondence with Lord Dalhousie who was then Secretary for Scotland[1]. The Universities (Scotland) Bills which were introduced in 1887 and 1888 continued to provide for terminating the dual Principalship but when, towards the end of 1888, it became known that Mr Stormonth Darling, a noted Churchman, was to be Solicitor General and as such would be responsible for the Bill, Professor Mitchell, who had always been active in Unionist politics, and Principal Cunningham went to Stormonth Darling, without telling any of their University Colleagues. They succeeded in extracting from him "a promise that he would put a clause in the Bill by which the

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Vol. 20/14. James Donaldson, undated Ms, entitled Statement of Facts in regard to the Dual Principalship.

Principalship of St Mary's would not be abolished. The first intimation which the University had of this entire reversal of the previous policy and of their wishes was when they saw the new clause in the Bill of 1889."[1]

The Senate was strongly of the opinion that there should be only one Principal but Mitchell "had a strong aversion to placing a Liberal like Donaldson in the same position . . . Principal Cunningham was also naturally averse to the abolition of his dignity. Principal Cunninghal had been an ardent Liberal before his appointment, but after it he changed his mind and came out as an energetic champion of Unionism and the Establishment."[2]

In the Committee stage of the Bill an amendment was introduced "That the Principal of the United College is now and henceforth to be Principal of the University". In an effort to secure the permanency of the Principalship of St Mary's the Tories made the Principal of the latter an ex officio member of the University Court and hoped to gather support for this by making similar provision for the Principal of University College. Thus the Tories paid Cunningham for the abandonment of Liberalism in his political conversion and endeavoured to injure Donaldson by inserting, in the clause constituting him Principal of the University, the words "but without any claim to additional salary in that capacity."[3]

By preserving the name of Principal of St Mary's to gratify a sector of its supporters the Government appeared to have won this political round but ironically it was compelled by the force of public

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Vol. 20/14.

opinion to abolish the Colleges in reality, for by the Universities (Scotland) Act of 1889 the property of the Colleges was transferred to the University Court and the management of that property and all the business of the Colleges was in future to be the responsibility of the Court; the Colleges ceased to have any legal existence and discharged no functions.

A manuscript of the events is preserved in the Donaldson Papers[1], in Donaldson's hand and written in the third person singular, in connection with which two interesting points may be raised. Firstly, there is also preserved among his papers another manuscript[2], identical but in an unidentified hand. Neither is dated but the existence of the latter suggests that he received this and copied it out himself. Secondly, there is an important error in the chronology of events narrated therein:

> "In 1885 Dr Shairp Principal of the United College died. The Liberal Goverment resolved not to fill up the vacancy, in the hope that arrangements might be made to make Principal Tulloch sole Principal of the University and Principal Tulloch was made aware of this fact. In the course of time, however, the Liberal Government went out and the Tories came in . . ." 3.

Reading this, the only construction it can be given is that Principal Shairp died during a Liberal Government, and "in the course of time", but subsequent to his death, the Liberals fell from office and were replaced by a Tory Government. This is not just an error arising from loose grammatical construction but of fact - since the Liberal Government was ousted in July and Shairp died in September, the order of these events is of the utmost significance in determining subsequent

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid: Vol. 20/21.
3. Ibid.

events. Now Donaldson was kept well informed on all that was happening, or likely to happen, about the Principalship; his interest in the appointment was so intense as to ensure that he followed events closely. The only explanation is that whoever wrote this made a mistake about the order of events - notwithstanding the passage of at least five years such an error is surprising in view of their importance - and Donaldson copied it out verbatim for his own record.

Lastly, and astonishingly, Donaldson appears to have been hesitant in assuming the rôle of Principal of the University (as opposed to merely Senior Principal) or he may just have wished to appear reluctant. "As regards the question put in the post script of your letter," the Chairman of the Universities Commission wrote early in 1893, "I consider that you are bound to undertake the duties of Principal of the University, as well as those of the United College. Sec. 5(6) of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1892 expressly provides that the Principal of the United College "shall in addition to his office as such profess the title and status and discharge the functions of the Principal of the university." This provision appears to me to be imperative although it involves a serious addition to your duties."[1] It is difficult to understand what responsibilities the dignity of Principal of the University brought with it beyond those Donaldson was already burdened with as Senior Principal but whatever they amounted to he may have felt a distinct lack of enthusiasm to assume them since he was to be accorded no increase in salary for the privilege of doing so.

With Donaldson's Installation as Principal of the United College scheduled for Saturday, 10 April 1886, feeling in St Andrews was running

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 7854, letter from J.B. Balfour, 30 January 1893. J.B. Balfour (1837-1095), Liberal MP for Clackmannan and Kinross(1880-1899) an Lord Advocate (1881-85, 1886 and 1892-95).

so high that there was a real possibility of an hostile demonstration by some of the students. The SRC was alarmed sufficiently by this prospect to give the front page of the University News Sheet published the Wednesday before the event, to an article entitled The Coming Installation. In an effort to defuse the situation, the writer sensibly told his readers that whatever they thought about the appointment, it was settled and nothing they could do would alter it. A pragmatic approach was recommended; the Senate had accepted the inevitable and the students would do well to follow the latter's example. "Any demonstration of hostility towards the new Principal at his Installation would not tend to produce good feelings between him and his students",[1] which could be only injurious to the University and, in the long term, to the disadvantage of the students themselves. Acknowledging that "To the eager and youthful enthusiast, this may appear rather a selfish and utilitarian way of looking at the question," the article concluded "Of course we do not imply that any pretensions of enthusiastic welcome should be made, unless the feeling actually exists. But we think that in the interests of common justice, the new Principal should have a fair chance; and we believe the good sense of the majority will see it in the same light."[2]

As his train clacked south through the greening Mearns, Donaldson could not be sure the suggestion that he be accorded a fair chance would be heeded. As it happened, he need have had no fears for the Installation passed off without more than the usual noisy high spirits. "The students called loudly for a speech," the Citizen noted, "but they called in vain."[3] Donaldson may have considered that to have acceded to this demand might have been trusting providence too far.

1. The University News Sheet, No. XIV, 7 April 1886.
2. Ibid.
3. The Citizen, St Andrews, 17 April 1886.

It is not infrequently observable that ability and experience are not always sufficient by themselves to secure advancement but that the latter owes more to a favourable conjunction of circumstances and personalities totally outwith the control of the individual. Donaldson's appontment to the Principalship at St Andrews exhibits this to a rare degree. Had circumstances not prevented the appointment of Professor Birrell as Principal during Salisbury's short administration in the latter half of 1885, thereby rendering the position still vacant when the Liberals returned to power (for what was to prove an equally short period) and had Donaldson's candidature not been actively promoted by a prominent and influential Liberal and member of the Government, he would never have been appointed.[1] Certainly from experience, scholarship, personality and his involvement in educational reform he was admirably qualified to assume the management and direction of a University on the threshold of important changes but there were other candidates whose credentials made them valid contenders: in the end it was political fidelity and an influential patron which determined the issue.

Moreover, had Donaldson not been so fortunate as to have been appointed at this time, it is highly improbably that he would have been appointed to any position which lay within the patronage of the Government for, although at the time the Liberals could not foresee it, when Lord Salisbury again formed a Government in the summer of 1886 a long Conservative ascendancy had begun. When in December 1905

1. The improbability of Donaldson being appointed to a vacancy by other than a Liberal government was acknowledged at the time by Sir Francis Sandford who wrote in November 1885, "I can greatly sympathise with you in your feelings on the subject of the vacancy - as I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that but for the change in government you would have been selected to the classical chair." Since there was no classical chair vacant at this time, it must be concluded that Sandford believed that such was combined with the Principalship of the United College

the Liberals returned to power, for Donaldson time and tide would no longer have synchronised for by then he was almost seventy five. It had been a remarkable saga of events and changing circumstances which brought him to the Principalship now. But, he might reflect, had not luck always been the way of the world?

> ". . . the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, not yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to all men."[1]

* * *

Immediately after his installation as Principal, Donaldson left St Andrews for Edinburgh, from where on Monday morning, he took the train to London. This was to be a short visit - he travelled back to Edinburgh on Friday - but his diary records that his four evenings and three days were crammed with engagements; visits to the Colonial and Foreign Office, to the 'Scotch' Office, to Lord Dalhousie[2] who had recently succeeded the Duke of Gordon as Secretary of State for Scotland, meeting Sir William Harcourt [3] - a prominent contender for the Liberal Leadership - and Lady Harcourt, attending a concert and, on the only evening that he did not dine with the Roseberys at Lansdowne House, he was at another Liberal dinner party where the guests included the Turkish Ambassador and the Prime Minister and Mrs Gladstone "both of whom congratulated me very heartily on the Principalship."[4]

1. Ecclesiastes 9.xi.
2. 13th Earl of Dalhousie (1843-1887).
3. Sir William Granville-Venables-Vernon-Harcourt (1827-1904). Harcourt was determined to secure the leadership for himself.
4. James Donaldson, Diary, Wednesday 14 April 1886.

By Friday evening he was back in Edinburgh where he stayed until the following Monday, April 19, before continuing home to Aberdeen. At first glance it seems remarkable that Donaldson should have gone to London for such a short time as three days, more particularly since within less than a month he would be in London for two months. There is no mention of the Education Department and it improbable that he would have gone to London only for three days' social fling. It seems likely that there was a more serious purpose occasioning the trip and this hypothesis is supported by two entries in his diary. For Sunday, April 11, when he was in Edinburgh and for the following Sunday, when he returned, there is only a two word entry, identical for both days - "Saw Cooper". Donaldson's friendship with Charles Cooper was almost wholly political, resting on the latter being Editor of a great Liberal paper. We can be certain that politics was the subject of the meeting as it would equally certainly have been a week later; probably he was being briefed and reporting back the following Sunday.

Donaldson was back in London on 5 May - this time he stayed until 5 July - and his social engagements leave no doubt as to the extent to which he was now an habitué of the beau monde. He revelled in it and was not averse to being lionised by titled hostesses in their Belgravia drawing-rooms; when he heard "Principal Donaldson' announced with gratifying empressement he knew that, although born out of wedlock and destitute of material advantages or background, he had truly arrived. As might be expected, he was frequently lunching or dining with the Roseberys at Landsdowne House which they had made the social headquarters of Liberalism, but he was now assured of many other invitations:

Lady Granville's At Home[1] where he met Lord and Lady Hartford,[2] Lord and Lady Airlie[3] and Sir Arthur Sullivan[4]; dining with the Dalhousies at Dover House, the Official residence of the Secretary of State for Scotland. One night he was welcomed to a concert at Dudley House[5] when the company included the Princess of Wales[6] and another he was dining with Lady Hayter to meet Mr and Mrs Goschen[7] and Lady Galloway.[8] He fitted in a reception at the Foreign Office before travelling to Epsom to spend Whit Sunday with the Roseberys at The Durdans, then back to London the following day to dine with the Aberdeens at their estate just north of London, Dollis Hill, which Gladstone used as a modern Chequers[9]. This year Margaret must have joined him in London - there is no evidence that she accompanied her husband on his sorties into the haute monde - for on 1 July he accompanied her to Southampton to see her embark for Madeira there to meet Jim who was sailing from West Africa to meet her. Donaldson returned to London and a few days later went home to Aberdeen.

1. Wife of 2nd Earl Granville, (1815-1891), Chancellor of London University and Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.
2. 6th Marquess of Hartford (1843-1912) former MP, Trustee and Governor of Rugby School and Comptroller of the Household.
3. 6th (11th but for the attainder) Earl of Airlie (1856-1900). He had married the previous year, Lady Mabel Gore, dau of 5th Earl of Aran, and Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Mary from 1900 until 1952.
4. Of the Gilbert and Sullivan partnership, whose musicals were taking London by storm.
5. Georgiana, second wife of the 1st Earl of Dudley (1846-1929). One of the eight staturesque daughters of Sir Thomas Moncrieff Bt, she was believed to a mistress of the Prince of Wales.
6. Later Queen Alexandra (1843-1924).
7. G.J. Goschen (1831-1907) was appointed Chancellor when Lord Randolph Churchill resigned and was known as "the man Lord Randolph forgot".
8. Wife of the 10th Earl of Galloway, she was the sister of the 3rd Marquess of Salisbury who became Prime Minister for the second time later than year.
9. The estate has now disappeared under suburban development.

During these months since the Principalship became vacant and even while immersed in the pleasures of the London Season, beneath his calm and genial façade Donaldson was an exceedingly worried man. The cause lay in Aberdeen. The previous August his mother had died at her home in Thistle Street and soon after one of his half brothers, William Hannan, a clerk with the North of Scotland Bank in Aberdeen, told him that the Bank was now demanding that he find security for about £100 which he had "borrowed" from the Bank some time before. Donaldson refused to become involved and remained obdurate when Hannan approached him again, confessing that as the result of speculating in Arizona shares he was unable to repay the sum in which case he would be dismissed from the Bank; but when he subsequently announced that he would lose his place at the Bank and be "utterly ruined" Donaldson yielded and on 28 September - ten days after principal Shairp died - signed a guarantee for £250.[1] Hannan's indebtedness to the bank considerably exceeded the sum he had first mentioned to Donaldson. When in December the Bank dismissed Hannan Donaldson learned that it had been aware for a considerable period of irregularities on Hannan's part - embezzlement was never mentioned for Banks never advertised such failings among their staff - and that it had for some time doubted the wisdom of retaining him. Donaldson had known nothing of this; he was very anxious and his worse fears were confirmed in January when the Bank requested a cheque for the sum he had guaranteed. "I have never given much attention to money matters," he explained to the Bank, "my object in life being to keep as free as possible from all pecuniary entanglements

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Glasgow Papers Box 14/8, draft letter to the North of Scotland Bank, referred to by the latter as that of 7 April 1886.

that I might devote my powers to the work that specially belongs to me."[1] Had he known the circumstances he would never have given the guarantee and further, he informed the Bank, Hannan had told him that "the Bank had been very free in lending money to its clerks" which caused Donaldson to suggest that the Bank had some liability in the matter. "I do not mean to deny my legal obligation," he assured the Bank on 7 April, although the realisation that he was unable to pay such a sum immediately could not be ignored: ". . . should I find it is binding I shall have to ask your indulgence . . . for years I have been supporting some and paying the debts of others . . . in consequence of this I have been terrible drained . . ."[2] For years he had been paying the debts of the feckless Jim who had, at last, taken up an appointment early the previous year and it is likely that he had been contributing towards his mother's needs. At the beginning of 1886 he had anticipated having most of his income to himself and that January he was called on to fulfil his guarantee. The Bank peremptorily dismissed Hannan's representaton that it had been free in lending to its employees and gave Donaldson until 4 May to make arrangements to meet what is described as both a moral and legal duty.[3] When Donaldson arrived in London in early May he sought advice from someone he described as "one of the highest authorities on money matters in London"[4] but the guarantee was binding. He paid £100 immediately and the remainder of the debt betwen then and June 1889 when, in the midst of another London Season, the Bank returned his guarantee while he was staying at Montague Place, Russell Square.

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid: Letter from North of Scotland Bank dated 13 April 1866.
4. Ibid: Draft letter to North of Scotland Bank (7 April 1886).

The Bank might not found it difficult to accept that a professor had never given much thought to money but it must have raised its corporate eyebrows when asked to believe that any professional man could be so credulous, even ingenuous, as to swallow what Hannan had told him about the Bank lending to its miserably paid clerks. Donaldson may have felt some obligation to help his half brother although it is equally likely that his reluctance to become involved was founded on him already having the measure of Hannan's character. Be that as it may, the extent to which Donaldson was anxious not to be identified with Hannan is evident from the fact that he never indicated to the Bank that he had any acquaintance with him before being approached for the guarantee and if the Bank discovered that Donaldson had signed, as guarantor, Hannan's indenture when he joined the Bank in 1872, it made no reference to it.

In the week following Donaldson's first payment to the Bank, Hannan made a will naming Donaldson as his sole beneficiary; he had expectations from a wealthy uncle and this was the most that he could do in appreciation. In addition, however, to the circumstances of his dismissal from the Bank, Hannan presented another cause for Donaldson's acute embarrassment - he left his estate "with the desire that anything he may not wish be given to Mrs Elizabeth Wood Smith or Christie whom I solemnly wish my executors to treat with all kindness and consideration. If she should have a child by me I should like it to be taken care of but I leave this matter to Professor Donaldson."[1] In Victorian terminology, William Hannan was "living in sin", a condition so shocking

1. Ibid.

that it could only be referred to in breathless whispers. This circumstance partly accounts for relations between Donald's mother and her Hannan children on the one side and their Hannan relatives on the other being of the worst description; indeed these were so appalling that William Hannan stipulated that no one of the name of Hannan - with the exception of his brother and sister, John and Christina - was to have anything whatsoever belonging to him nor even look upon him when he was dead because of "the abuse they have one and all heaped on me and my dear mother and everyone belonging to her and me."[1]

One can only wonder what Margaret Donaldson thought of all this. Did she recognize it as a Christian challenge for her charity and forgiveness - in the values of the eighteen eighties £250 would demand a generous capacity for forgiveness - or did she identify it as a manifestation of sin, the consequences of which her husband had been intent on so forcefully describing when, as her brother's young protegé, she had first known him? Perhaps she was spared any knowledge of it for there is no evidence that Donaldson ever told her.

Sunday, 15 August, was the Donaldsons' last day at College Bounds; the following morning they left for the fashionable spa at Strathpeffer, where they discovered many people they knew. On 30 August they arrived in St Andrews where Donaldson had rented a large stone house, Castlegate, on the north east corner of Castle Street overlooking the ruins of the castle to the wide expanse of the North Sea.[2]

1. Ibid.
2. Although there was an official residence for the Principal of St Mary's College there was none for that of the United College, although in 1878 the University had purchased land on the Scores with the intention of remedying this.

Less than a month after arriving in St Andrews, on 11 September, Donaldson was with Lord and Lady Dalhousie at Panmure House near Carnoustie where the there guests included Lord Dunmore[1], Lord Claud Hamilton[2] and the irrepressible Mrs Huffa Williams[3]. St Andrews saw him on the 15th only to leave again two days later for Dalmeny where among Rosebery 's guests he met Sir Francis Knollys[4], the Dalhousies and Lord and Lady Spencer.[5] Towards the end of October he joined the Aberdeens at Haddo for another house party and on 16 December, as soon as the term ended, he set off for London - on this occasion he heard Cardinal Manning preach - went to Mentmore on the 22nd and returned to St Andrews the following day. This social pattern, which had begun to develop only a few years earlier, was to continue for the remainder of his life. He adored the vie de richesse but equally his quiet unassuming manner, good humour and broad knowledge made him a welcome addition to these parties where serious social and political issues were also discussed in the lingua familia of a privileged class.

The Liberals were again in power but they had been able to form a government only with the support of the Irish members. Although in the election the previous December, the Liberals outnumbered the Conservatives by more than eighty, the Conservatives and Home Rulers together outnumbered the Liberals by four. Only by accommodating Parnell could an administration be formed. For a week or two after the Election Gladstone hoped the Conservatives would adopt some form of Home Rule: when it was evident that Salisbury had no such intention he allied the Liberals with Parnell, defeated the Government and prepared to tackle the Irish problem himself.

1. 7th Earl of Dunmore (1841-1907) was Lord in Waiting to the Queen.
2. Second son of the 1st Duke of Abercorn.
3. One of the most prominent figures of late Victorian and Edwardian house parties, her contribution was to provide incessant gales of laughter without requiring any reason.
4. Francis Knollys (1837-1922), later created 1st Viscount Knollys, was Private Secretary to the Prince of Wales
5. 5th Earl Spencer (1835-1910), a former Viceroy of Ireland, in 1866 he was appointed Lord President of the Council.

Rosebery, who had been Foreign Secretary since the first days of February, was personally unenthusiastic about this policy of Gladstone's for whom over the preceding years Donaldson had increasing contempt, regarding him as responsible for holding back Rosebery's political career. Donaldson's support for Home Rule owed less to his belief in Gladstone's vision for peace in Ireland than to it being the policy Rosebery espoused, even if the latter's response to the issue was unenthusiastic and conditioned by his relationship with the Government. Home Rule completely dominated the political scene and in correspondence between Liberals all other topics yielded a central place to it. Donaldson was now corresponding direct with Dublin Castle since the same month that he had been appointed Principal, Aberdeen also had been rewarded for his fidelity to the Party with the Viceroyalty and immediately assumed the position. As early as 4 March Donaldson was proffering unsolicited advice to the Viceroy:

> "I happened a short time ago to speak to an Irishman and he said that the thing for the Lord Lieutenant to do was to get the Mayor and Roman Catholic Archbishop to accept the invitations to the Castle. It struck me that Cooper might do something to help this . . . several Irishmen used to send him parliamentary news, I do not know how he stands with them now - but if you thought that the suggestion might be of any use, I could write to Cooper <u>as from myself</u> and urge him to do his best." 1.

Cooper was impatiently waiting to learn the provisions of Gladstone's Home Rule Bill; rumours and speculation filled the political air but it was not until the measure was submitted to the Cabinet that anything definite was known. He arranged with a member of the Cabinet to send him the details in cypher and by this means the first authentic outline

1. Haddo House Mss: NRA (Scot) Box 1/6, letter to Lord Aberdeen, 4 March 1886.

of the purport of the Bill appeared in the Scotsman's London Letter on 29 March. When Cooper, who in past days had marshalled the whole force of the Scotsman in support of devolution, discovered that Gladstone planned to establish a separate Irish Parliament with full powers he was appalled. While he had favoured Home Rule he was implacably opposed to Gladstone's scheme because it would necessitate repealing the Union with Ireland, break up the United Kingdom and damage imperial unity.[1] "It would be difficult" Cooper wrote "to exaggerate the consternation which this announcement created among Liberals in Scotland."2

There were however in Scotland two prominent Liberals, both of whom Cooper counted among his closest friend, who supported the Bill. Rosebery's aspirations of inheriting the Liberal leadership dictated that he cleave to Gladstone and Donaldson, who only the previous month had been acknowledging his indebtedness to Rosebery for the Principalship, predictably adopted the policy to which Rosebery, albeit no zealot, at least felt constrained to pay lip service. Beginning on 9 April, the day after Gladstone unfolded his proposals to the Commons, The Scotsman uncompromisingly denounced the Bill and maintained a sustained campaign against it. "The Bill will be rejected by a goodly majority, as it ought to be," Cooper informed Donaldson with total assurance on 9th May, and was equally certain of the effect on the Party, noting tartly that "Mr Gladstone will, I suppose, ask for a dissolution, and if he gets it it will be his last crime against the Liberal party . . .

1. The Glorious Privilege, The History of the Scotsman, (Edin., 1967), p.74. (Various authors).
   It is ironic that the paper which Gladstone thought went too far in its advocacy of devolution now was to part company with him because it believed he had gone too far in proposing self government for Ireland.
2. Ibid.

the result of an election on the Irish question would be the demolition of Gladstone's Party."[1]

Not even such a direct and unequivocal statement of Cooper's views - on top of what was repeatedly being raised in The Scotsman - deterred Donaldson from his determination to convert Cooper to the Home Rule side, tackling him next with the suggestion that if The Scotsman had supported the Bill the Government would not be encountering the difficulties arising from the widespread hostility to the proposed legislation.[2] Donaldson cannot have been unaware of either the extent or the depth of the resentment the Bill had engendered in so many Liberals and it is correspondingly improbable that he really believed that the support of The Scotsman would have changed the fate of the Bill. It is more likely that since Rosebery, Cooper and he had been such friends for so long, Donaldson reasoned that if he could support Rosebery, surely Cooper could too. Despite that friendship, Cooper was to be neither cajoled nor taken to task in not giving the editorial support of his paper to a policy which, quite simply, he believed was wrong. 'I believe the Bill to be bad and dangerous," he replied concisely on 5 June to Donaldson's implied criticism, "I see in it proof of the vanity of an old man who knows that whatever may come hereafter from such a measure he cannot personally suffer." [3]

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6290, letter from Charles Cooper, 9 May 1886.
2. Ibid: Ms 6291, letter from Charles Cooper, June 1886.
3. Ibid.

Later that month Donaldson had to concede that Cooper's prediction had been accurate - not only was the Bill defeated, supposedly by the defection of Liberals opposed to Home Rule,[1] but Gladstone, faced with the choice of resigning or seeking a dissolution, resolved on the more hazardous course and the following month "worked up to a fever pitch of apostlic zeal"[2] he fought another election. This time the sole issue was Home Rule. Notwithstanding his unqualified failure over the preceding months to change Cooper's mind, Donaldson evidently had not abandoned him as a lost cause. In his memoirs, published ten years later, Cooper wrote that;

"While the election of 1886 was in progress, and Mr Gladstone was in Edinburgh, I received a call from an old friend who had attached himself to the Home Rule cause. He was not, and never had been, a Member of Parliament. He was not a private secretary to anybody. But I knew that he was on most intimate terms of friendship with Lord Rosebery, and I knew that he was seeing and talking with Mr Gladstone every day. He came, he said, to ask whether if Mr Gladstone consented to any modifications of the Bill, the Scotsman's opposition to it would be withdrawn. Would I say what changes would induce such withdrawal? My answer was, that nothing but a change in the very principle of the measure could reconcile me to it . . . My visitor argued; but it was in vain . . . He did not come of his own motion; he said he did not."[3]

This old friend who "asserted that my (Cooper's) view would have weight at what he spoke of as headquarters"[4] can only have been Donaldson,

1. This was the orthodox Gladstonian view but too simplistic: "Liberal party organization in the constituencies had fallen into disrepair, and the rank and file could not be roused to support a policy that offended the anti-Papist sensibilities of the Nonconformist communities, frighten the landholding classes, and left many Radicals bitterly resentful."
   S. Ross, Asquith, (Lond., 1975), p.19
2. G.M. Trevelyan, British History in the Nineteenth Century and After. (Lond., 1964), p.397.
3. Charles A. Cooper, An Editor's Retrospect, (Lond., 1896), p.408.
4. Ibid.

the headquarters, Dalmeny, and Cooper's allusions to the content of their correspondence removes any doubt about his identity. In the General Election of July 1886 the Liberals were heavily defeated by the Conservatives and the Liberal Unionists; the schism in the Liberal Party was to be irremedial. "What an upturn in political matters has taken place . . ." Donaldson exclaimed to Ishbel when the result was known, "I have no doubt that many who have opposed Mr Gladstone will regret it bitterly in a year or two and see what a splendid opportunity has been lost."[1] If Donaldson believed Cooper was to be numbered among these hewas soon disappointed; remorse over the stand he had taken was never to afflect the Editor of the Scotsman whose withdrawal of suport proved a grievous loss. "One of the most serious aspects of the case," Donaldson acknowledged towards the end of 1888, "is that The Scotsman is not merely a newspaper but an office for the organisation of political action."[2] During this time Donaldson was frequently at Raith, the home near Kirkcaldy of the young Liberal MP and landowner, Ronald Munro Ferguson[3], where Liberals met to consider the Party's plight. "And at all the meetings at Raith there was a hearty and unanimous feeling that you must be the future leader," he assured Rosebery, ". . . we must get more of these men together and thus build up the ruin caused by the persistent opposition of Cooper."[4]

1. Haddo Hse Mss: NRA (Scot.) Box 1/6, letter to Lady Aberdeen, 19 July 1886.
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/117, letter to Lord Rosebery 6 November 1888.
3. Ronald Munro Ferguson (1860-1934), MP for Ross and Cromarty (1884-85) and Leith Burghs (1886-1914), before being appointed Governor General of Australia (1914-1920), and later Secretary for Scotland (1922-24). A close political colleague of Rosebery who appointed Munro Ferguson his Private Secretary when Foreign Minister between February and March 1886 and again from August 1892 until March 1894. Created first and only Viscount Novar.
4. Between the spring of 1892 and the summer of 1895 when Gladstone and Rosebery were successively Premiers.

Even now, after such crushing electoral rejection and the Party torn apart with dissention and recriminations, Donaldson failed to fully appreciate how profound was the anger and sense of betrayal which many Liberals felt over Gladstone's determination to give Ireland Home Rule. None of those who gathered with Donaldson at Raith imagined that, with the exception of one short and inglorious interval, the Liberals were destined to be out of power for the next twenty years.

# CHAPTER 11.

At his first session as Principal drew to a close in the spring of 1887, Donaldson could reflect that both the Professors and the townspeople had shown him an extraodinary amount of kindness. To a considerable extent this had been due to his tact and consideration and his efforts to conciliate those who had been so violently opposed to his appointment. He never alluded to anything that had been said about him, "And people who had their hands in the plot (to prevent his appointment) have come up to me and offered me every kindness and praised me without measure."[1]

The pleasure that he was finding in the Principalship and his apparent success in disarming those who had been disposed to regard him less than kindly encouraged him to view the future with optimism when suddenly his happiness was blighted. Margaret developed an intestinal obstruction and eight days later, on 16 April, died from intestinal strangulation at Castlegate. She was sixty nine. The shock of her loss and of witnessing her dreadful death affected Donaldson deeply, the more so since, although several years older than himself, Margaret had always enjoyed inexhaustible energy and good health. He laid her to rest in the Cathedral precinct, safe from all sin, in the keeping of the God in whom she believed with such uncomplicated faith and steadfast certainty.

There is nothing to suggest that their marriage had been other than happy. Always deeply religious, Margaret had what Aberdeen described as "that peculiar charm which is imparted by a combination of a gentle and retiring disposition with large capacity and wide sympathy,"[2] while one of the Professors asserted that she had "proved

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/98, letter to Lord Rosebery, 13 March 1887.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 5703, letter from Lord Aberdeen.

a very great addition to the social life of the University, from her quiet, unostentatious, and kindly manner and her tact[1]". Despite her modest and unpretentious nature, Margaret was a capable and educated woman and, not least, she always had been an ardent Liberal[2]. But, unlike her husband, she was totally devoid of social ambition. Unmoved by the vain pomp and glory of a transient world, her concern with earning a diadem in the heavenly Jerusalem left her indifferent to coronets bestowed by a merely temporal sovereign. Margaret was contented and happiest in the circle of her own home and family; she was a "good" woman and Donaldson's friends recognised her qualities and entreated her to visit them with her husband, but to no avail.[3] It is likely that in addition to her shyness, she found it hard to reconcile a strict Congregationalist ethos of hard work, plain living and high ideals with that wealthy leisured circle - even if they were Liberals - to which it must have seemed her husband so rapturously had yielded up his soul. Margaret did not identify with nor relate to the spirit of the age, for by the eighties the great Victorian religious revival was losing its force; moral and religious earnestness had become wearisome and there was a renewed feeling for the pleasures of life as well as its moral and religious duties.[4]

1. St Andrews UL: Professor W.C. McIntosh, Autobiography, unpublished 37113/4 p.286. Interestingly McIntosh makes no reference to the second Mrs Donaldson who was to be on the University scene for many years whereas Margaret had been in St Andrews for less than a year.

2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/104, letter to Lord Rosebery, 3 May 1887.

3. Margaret Donaldson was certainly not excluded from his invitations. Connie Leconfield wrote from Kinnaird Castle in October 1885, "Would not Mrs Donaldson consent this time to accompany you?" and again a week later "Do try to persuade Mrs Donaldson to come too." St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 7465, letter from Lady Leconfield, 7 October 1885; Ibid, Ms 7464, letter from Lady Leconfield, 13 October 1885.

4. This change in the outlook of society, apparent in the eighties became much more pronounced in the nineties when it would be more fashionable in smart society to be beautiful, amusing or just rich, than religious and good.

Like many Victorian marriages, theirs had been less a love match than a union founded on practical and realistic considerations. For Margaret, the marriage prospects for a woman of her age definitely would have thinned; the difference in their ages suggests that on his part he sought a stable and secure home and with her greater maturity she was considered to have had a great influence on Donaldson's education and early career.[1] They had been bound by shared religious, political and intellectual ideals and Donaldson always had borne her genuine affection and respect. That their social lives had been increasingly separate, particularly in latter years, and that in the future he was to experience a depth of love exceeding anything Margaret had ever evoked may suggest that he had extended to her only a limited emotional commitment. But this is not to trivialise his emotions now: Margaret Kennedy had proved a true friend since those distant days when her brother had first taken an interest in a disadvantaged, but promising lad, not yet a teenager and for thirty years she had been an unfailing helpmate, tolerant - even if unenthusiastic - of his smart and wealthy friends and a constant reference point at the centre of his domestic life. Her death left him devastated, feeling as if he had been "cast from a wreck on a lonely strand"[2]; the emptyness of Castlegate depressed him and in the still reaches of the night he was desolate. His loneliness was accentuated since Jim was now far away. For the past two years he had been in West Africa.

The concern Donaldson had expressed when he wrote to Jim from Paris in 1879 had proved justified. Jim continued to live in Edinburgh

1. St Andrews UL: 37113/4, Professor W.C. McIntosh, Autobiography, unpublished, p.286.
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/104, letter to Lord Rosebery 3 May 1887.

after his parents moved to Aberdeen and, unable to secure a career, he idled around the Faculty of Advocates and was improvident with money.[1] To Donaldson, his son's failings were as an open book. "His weakness seems to be such a liking for society" he recognised "that if he cannot get good, he will take bad - and that is more readily found than good."[2] Donaldson had such high hopes for this, his only surviving child and the sadness and distress that Jim's behaviour caused him - Donaldson never failed to pay Jim's debts and get him out of financial scrapes - is clear.

Jim hankered after a post in the Colonial Service but it was not until Donaldson, in despair after a particlarly costly round of settling Jim's debts in Edinburgh,[3] went to London in the autumn of 1884 especially to see Lord Derby, the Colonial Secretary, that Jim was at last offered a position, as Queen's Advocate at Freetown.[4] Jim left for West Africa early 1885 but he was back at the end of the following year and at Castlegate the Donaldsons had looked forward to having Jim home for Christmas. "Jim never came" his father noted in his diary

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers: G13/14, letter to Margaret Donaldson, 17 May 1885.
   The animosity that father and son had engendered (before Donaldson left for Aberdeen in 1882) as a consequence of their association with Rosebery was still alive for in November that year when he was still dealing with Jim's creditors, Donaldson found among the accounts "some that are pure impositions but the creditors have been urged on by law agents out of spite."
   NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/51, letter to Lord Rosebery, 5 November 1884.
2. NLS: Rosebery papers, letter to Lord Rosebery.
3. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, G13/14, letter to Margaret Donaldson, 17 May 1885.
4. The 15th Earl of Derby was Colonial Secretary (1882-85). It is an indication of how little was known of West Africa that Donaldson could find nothing about Sierra Leone in the University Library at Aberdeen.
   St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, G13/14, letter to Margaret Donaldson, 28 November 1884.

on Christmas Day, "Gloomy Christmas". Jim had gone to the south of France instead, since his heart had been diagnosed as 'irritable and weak". He had returned to Freetown when his mother died and to Donaldson's grief was added the unremitting worry about his son. Donaldson endeavoured to distract himself with the work of the University and his other educational interests. The week before Margaret died he had been appointed a Governor of Waid Academy ad on 27 June he travelled with Principal Cunningham of St Mary's College to Windsor Castle to present an Address from the University to the Queen Empress on her Golden Jubilee. He continued to live at Castlegate, looked after by his servants; Annie Campbell, who had entered his service when he arrived in Aberdeen in 1882, was to remain with him until his death thirty two years later. Although a widower, he still enjoyed company ranging from the young painter John Lorimer, whom he invited to stay at Castlegate while painting Knox's pulpit for his famous painting The Ordination of the Elders[1], to the octogenarian, Professor Blackie[2] and Mrs Russel "one of our most ardent Liberals"[3], the widow of Charles Cooper's predecessor as Editor of The Scotsman. There was nothing stuffy about evenings at home with Donaldson; there was no standing on ceremony, he was thoughtful as a host and ensured that everyone enjoyed themselves.

In April 1890, after being a widower for exactly three years, Donaldson surprised everyone by suddenly announcing that he was marrying

1. John was the son of the University Reformer, Professor James Lorimer. The painting is now in the National Gallery of Scotland; the interior of the church depicted is that of Carnbee, near the Lorimer's home at Kellie Castle, Anstruther.
2. Letters of John Blackie to his Wife, Ed. by A.S. Walker, (Edin., 1909, p.366.
3. Haddo House Mss: NRA (Scot), Box 1/6, letter to Lady Aberdeen, 30 November 1896.

again. His second wife differed markedly from Margaret. Seventeen years his junior, Mary Christie had been widowed twice by the time she was forty: as Mary Letitia Ridell Webster she had married a barrister of the Inner Temple who died leaving her with a young son, whereupon she married a widower, Major General Hugh Christie whose active service had been in India with the Madras Army. They made their home in St Andrews at 16 North Bell Street - soon to be renamed Greyfriars Gardens - and it was there in September 1888 that the General was carried off with dysentery leaving Mary again a widow. In 1886 Mary's sixteen year old son matriculated at the University where he was a student for the following three years and it is likely that she and Donaldson met during this time.

Mary was the product of a totally different background from that which Margaret Kennedy had known, affluent - her father, Thomas Riddell Webster who had originated from the little village of Kinnettles in Strathmore had been a barrister and Parliamentary agent - well connected[1] and socially accomplished, Mary reflected the attitudes of her class and time. Two marriage settlements - she continued to enjoy the beneficial interest from both until her death - afforded her a comfortable and independent income[2]. Mary was not marrying for the third time for security, rather she was a woman who wanted to be married; she had more to contribute to life than the defined and restricted rôle which convention consigned to the Victorian widow could ever offer.

1. Among these was the 1st Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, whose mother Helen Sheridan, was a granddaughter of the dramatist.
2. The two settlements amounted to almost £20,000 of which Mary enjoyed the sole beneficial interest.

Donaldson wrote Rosebery with the news before anyone in St Andrews knew. He accorded a priority to recording the status of Mary's previous husbands - he saw no need to mention that each had made handsome provision for his widow - as if anxious thereby to establish her impeccable social credentials, adding for good measure, that she was a great granddaughter of Brindsley Sheridan. For Donaldson it was certainly a brilliant match, causing a frisson of excitement which he could not disguise. But a wife such as Mary would also have practical advantages; "I am sure," he wrote confidently, "that she will help me very much when I am in London and want to see men and we may be able to do a good deal in Scotland."[1] Clearly, he foresaw that together, they could work in tandem to promote the Liberal Party. Mary combined intelligence and charm with the experience of a femme du monde and was generously endowed with the attributes for successful entertaining. For while at this period upper class women were, by todays' ideas, virtually uneducated, and took almost no part in public life, they fulfilled an important rôle as hostesses, providing a comfortable ambience in which they skillfully brought together in drawing rooms and around dinner tables men of diverse interests and often widely differing political convictions. To play such apart successfully a large and suitably impressive house was necessary. Castlegate was a commodious and conveniently situated family home but, besides lacking a garden, presented definite limitations for the scale of entertaining it could accommodate. It certainly was not grand enough for what Donaldson was now envisaging so he leased Scores Park, an imposing mansion on the Scores a short distance west of Castlegate, set in its walled garden on the edge of the cliffs.

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/130, letter to Lord Rosebery, 21 April 1890.

Donaldson was fully aware that this move could too easily be thought ridiculous pretension, a folie de grandeur. "It is much too large," he conceded, "but St Andrews is fearfully deficient in good houses, and it is really the only one we can get at present."[1] As justification this fell on its face - the University accounted for the town having a much larger number of large houses than might be found in any other of comparable size. But none was as large as Scores Park. Built in 1863 as a mild but uncompromising essay in the fashionable Scottish Baronial vocabulary, the mansion had no rival as the finest home in St Andrews. Indeed it was so large - it boasted nine bedrooms and a further eight for staff - that the owner, Major Malcolm Patton, had found it impossible to attract a buyer. Donaldson may well have persuaded Patton to grant a lease by giving him to understand that there was some probability of the University ultimately buying the property; "we shall rent it for a year or two and in the end I hope the University may buy it"[2] It is difficult to imagine what grounds he could possibly have had for such an expectation beyond wishful thinking, since although the University several years earlier had bought a site on the Scores with the intention of building a residence for the Master of the United College its financial plight ensured that this never materialised and by 1890 there was no cause to encourage greater optimism. The simple truth was that Donaldson had set his heart on living at Scores Park; making his home there was an immediately recognizable social statement. This second marriage did not signal any sudden transformation in Donaldson's attitudes and behaviour but whereas his life - particularly since

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/129, letter to Lord Rosebery, 24 April 1890. Donaldson wrote intimating his forthcoming marriage and the lease of Scores Park in the same letter which suggests that the announcement of the former was contingent on the lease being agree.
2. Ibid.

his friendship with Rosebery began in 1879 - had enabled him to move into a world which his first wife had no wish to share, Mary's background was much closer to that world and together they were wholeheartedly to enjoy all that world had to offer.

Mary had been living at 4 Crick Road, Oxford since the previous autumn to be near Sam when he entered Balliol and it was there at S.S. Philip & Thomas that Donaldson and Mary Christie were married on 2 June 1890. They spent their honeymoon in Paris and then enjoyed a few days in London before travelling home to St Andrews. After dining with the Roseberys - they had recently moved to a house of their own at 38, Berkley Square - Donaldson, as was his habit noted in his diary "Dined with Lord and Lady Rosebery" and then, as an afterthought, squeezed in "Both of us" between this and the left hand margin; nothing could more clearly indicate the difference that this marriage was to make to his life, for the harmony and fulfilment it brought him was something he had never known before. He had admired and respected Margaret but he adored Mary: whereas Margaret had been "My dear wife", Mary was "My own Darling" and when separated he wrote to her almost every day, of how he missed her and was looking forward to her return.

Donaldson's happiness in 1890 was overshadowed by Jim who was asked to retired from the Colonial Service on the grounds of ill health at the beginning of the year. Donaldson sooon learned,[1] if he had not guessed the truth already, that ill health was the euphemism employed by the Colonial Office for alcoholism.[2] In the Colonial Service a

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 7678, letter from Munro Ferguson, 26 February, 1891. Munro Ferguson was married to Lady Helen Blackwood, dau of the Marquess of Dufferin and therefore related to Mary.
2. Ibid: Ms 7046, letter from Lord Knutsford, Colonial Secretary, to Munro Ferguson, 18 March 1891.

weakness for drink, aggravated by the climate, and insidiously developing into alcoholism was not unusual; it almost amounted to an occupational risk. For these reasons a greater tolerance was generally extended to it in the colonies than at home and for Jim to be asked to resign can only indicate that his drinking was embarrassingly obvious. Ten years earlier Donaldson had confided to Rosebery that Jim was his only concern and once his son "gained an independent position I shall be free from all cares."[1] But for Donaldson, Jim's drinking was to be a protracted sorrow.

Jim had been received into the Roman Catholic Church and when by 1893 it was apparent that he was never likely to be offered another government position his thoughts turned to becoming a priest or monk. Unlike so many Victorians, when it was almost taken for granted to be at least casually anti-semitic and anti-catholic, Donaldson never had any such prejudice and sought the advice of the Catholic priest in St Andrews. Father Angus suggested that Jim spend a fortnight at the Abbey at Ford Augustus where he could discuss what was involved with the priests there.[2] Jim went to Fort August in December 1894: the visit was not a success and before the end of the year the Abbott asked Donaldson to remove his son. For Donaldson, who had always been so encouraging and supportive, patient and forbearing, who had done everything in his power to help, enlisting influential connections on Jim's behalf and knowing that in small and insular St Adrews it was all an open secret - Jim's behaviour was a heavy cross.

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, 10014/198, letter to Lord Rosebery, 31 October 1882.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 7854, letter from Father Angus, 1894.

It was now decided at Scores Park that Jim was not to return to St Andrews. Donaldson acted with astonishing speed and in a few days had found a farmer near Beauly who would take Jim to live with him. It is easy to infer from these arrangements that Donaldson had reached that stage which says enough is enough but there may have been another factor in determining a limit to his tolerance - Mary. Nothing is known of the relationship beteen stepmother and stepson. Jim may well have resented this woman who had given his father's life a new focus and rebuilt his domestic and social world, but fashioned very differently from that which he had known with Margaret. Moreover, Mary was so different from Jim's mother that comparisons were as inevitable as they were unavoidable - she was fashionable, wealthy and thirty years younger. Where Jim was concerned, Margaret's indulgent, sheltering and, in some regards, blind love rendered her incapable of other than a wholly subjective judgment; Mary was capable of a much more detached and objective assessment and she may not have liked what she saw. A fondness for drink was not unusual in professional and upper class Victorian society but it was expected to be indulged within strictly recognised and accepted conventions of behaviour, the foremost of which was that there must be no scandal. Since the University had bought Scores Park, it was the official residence of the Principal and although Jim spent time in London and Edinburgh, Mary may have been no longer prepared to risk embarrassment and humiliation, if she had not already experienced it.[1]

1. It is interesting that in 1891, when on their first lengthy stay abroad together, Mary would note "No drunkenness" and other comments on the effects of drink of the local population; to comment on the absence of drunkenness must indicate that the problem of drink was at a conscious level in her mind.

Donaldson's attitude is no less difficult to determine: "there can be no question," he had written in one of his earliest editorials in the Educational News[1] that drunkeness is the disgrace and curse of our country," asserting that "the teacher ought to be a powerful agency in preventing the disease from coming into existence . . . (The teacher's) memory should be a storehouse of the cases in which intemperance has caused ruin and degradation." It was a cruel irony that Donaldson had been confronted with the problem within his own family. Despite that ruin and degradation of which he had written claiming his own son, he never before or afterwards, championed temperance - he kept a creditable cellar at Scores Park - but advocated a responsible attitude to alcohol.

The last act of this family tragedy was played out in a farmhouse near Muir of Ord. Jim lived en famille with the tenant farmer at Fairbairn Mains and in the early winter of 1896 walked in the rain the five miles to Muir of Ord. His health already was prematurely weakened and now he fell seriously ill. On 5 February 1897 he died. With his conversion to Rome, he had himself removed the possibility of being beside his mother beneath the green Cathedral sward. In any case, after the sorrow and anguish his life had brought his father these past years, the last thing Donaldson sought was the attention and comment which burial in St Andrews inevitably would attract. He had afforded Jim such an auspicious start, with those advantages in childhood and

1. James Donaldson, Temperance and Teachers, Educational News, 25 March 1876, p.169.
Donaldson made the sensible point in his article that children should be made aware not only of the damaging effects of alcohol but also of its beneficial applications, that teachers had an important reponsibility in educating children about alcohol and that the teacher - expressed in truly Victorian vocabulary - "must seek the root of the vice in the depraved disposition."

youth which he himself had never known; on this son he had centred so many bright hopes, only to witness them all inexorably perish. Yet in death Jim was not wholly unwept, unhonoured and unsung. His father left him in Beauly, to sleep in the quiet earth of the Catholic cemetery there, and over his grave raised a white marble cross, its inscription recording that James Kennedy Donaldson once had been Queen's Advocate in Sierra Leone.

Almost as soon as he arrived in St Andrews, Donaldson became actively involved with the local Liberal Association and was soon Chairman.[1] St Andrews formed part of the new constituency known as The St Andrews Burghs[2] and in 1888 the Aberdeens approached him about securing the Liberal nomination for their young protegé, John Sinclair[3], a former captain in the 5th Lancers who was looking for a Parliamentary Seat. Patronage was essential and Donaldson, who had so benefitted from patronage himself, was now called on by the Aberdeens to exercise it for Captain Sinclair. Ishbel wrote Donaldson that she was "quite ashamed to find how very much my heart is set on the boy's success . . . and may I say, if at all possible you will get him accepted. You could never do us a greater kindness nor one for which we would be more grateful.

1. The loss of the records of the Association precludes determining when Donaldson became Chairman but it was not later than early 1888.
2. It had been created by the Redistribution of Seats Act, 1884 and comprised St Andrews, Cupar, Crail, Kilrenny, Anstruther and Pittenweem.
3. Notwithstanding this inauspicious start, John Sinclair (1860-1915), who had been Private Secretary to Aberdeen during the latter's brief Viceroyalty in 1886, became Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for War (1892-95), Secretary to the Governor-General of Canada (1896-97) at the beginning of Aberdeen's term as Governor General, Secretary for Scotland (1905-12) and Governor of Madras (1912-19). In 1904 he married Lady Marjorie Gordon, the Aberdeens' only daughter and was created Baron Pentland.
4. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 5647, letter from Lady Aberdeen, 7 October 1888.

Donaldson, of course, did his best but the hapless Captain Sinclair was a poor and unconvincing speaker, shortcomings all the more evident when the proposed candidate made his first speech in the constituency immediately after Asquith at Dairsie on 2 October that year. Donaldson had to let Ishbel know that Captain Sinclair was unlikely to be adopted. "Aberdeen will be terribly disgusted," she replied but as always succeeded in commanding centre stage, "as for myself I feel inclined to cut my throat, but I suppose the inclination will pass over."[1] It did but the lack of enthusiasm of Donaldson's Committee remained unintelligible to her, especially since Captain Sinclair was willing to pay his own costs, prompting her to point out that, ". . . it does seem somewhat ludicrous when one hears such an outcry about not being able to find good candidates ready to pay their own expenses that they should turn up their noses at a man who anyway speaks twenty times better than one half the men in Parliament."[2]

Petulantly, Ishbel levelled at Donaldson that after the amount of work Aberdeen had done for the Liberals all over the country, it was "rather hard . . . that one little thing (Sinclair's adoption as candidate) cannot be done for him."[3] Donaldson had done all he could to please the Aberdeens by having Sinclair adopted - and that the latter was in the position to meet his own election expenses must have been a substantial factor in his favour at a time when there was no such thing as salaries for Members - but his poor impression on the platform was more than even Donaldson could overcome. Yet this may have been

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 5648, letter from Lady Aberdeen 8 October 1888.

only partly the reason for him not being adopted by The St Andrews Burghs, since an inability to speak well had not always proved an insuperable barrier to a political career and indeed Sinclair was to have a distinguished career after he eventually secured a seat in 1892. The St Andrews Burghs had great difficulty for many years in attracting an acceptable candidate which may to some extent reflect differences within the Committee itself. Unfortunately the Association records, which might throw light on this area are missing but a consequence of these difficulties was that, inevitably, the Association's choice of a candidate would ultimately settle on the most prominent Liberal in their midst, Donaldson himself.

When Donaldson returned to St Andrews from his honeymoon in the summer of 1890 he found that he was the subject of speculation and interest, less on account of the new Mrs Donaldson, than as the result of an article appearing in the St Andrews Citizen only a few days after his wedding. The difficulty in finding a candidate had persisted and now under the heading "Next Gladstonian Candidate for St Andrews Burghs" the reader was informed that Principal Donaldson had been invited to be the Liberal candidate.[1] Donaldson knew human nature too well to deceive himself into believing that no residual resentment and animosity about his appointment as Principal remained but even he must have been surprised at the tenor of the article. The Citizen believed that Donaldson was "favourably considering the flattering proposal" and pointed out that as a result of his marriage that week, he was understood to be now financially in a position to enter Parliament. The article continued:

1. St Andrews Citizen, 7 June 1890.

"He can never, we should imagine, think of becoming a Member of Parliament and contemplate keeping on his Principalship at the same time. If the duties of the latter position are so slight as to warrant him without resigning to aspire to Parliamentary honours it would seem to be a great waste of the funds of the University to pay a large salary for a Principalship which has no chair attached to it. . . . If Principal Donaldson's candidature involves resignation, he will be likely to think twice about it, as in that event, it will mean loss of a good annual income and" leaving the sharpest barb of a generously barbed article to the end, "it will enable the present conservative Government to give the Principalship to one of their own friends, just as Dr Donaldson was himself appointed by the Gladstonian Governments." 1

That he was invited to stand is not surprising; he had been actively involved in arranging meetings and speakers since he came to St Andrews and he was known to be on intimate terms with many prominent Liberals - it could not but be of advantage to the Burghs to have a member with such connections - but if he considered the invitation at all, and there is no evidence that he did, it was not for long. He enjoyed political talk and the social life of the Liberal milieu but he liked to exercise his political influence in manoeuvres behind the scenes or as a go-between; the rough and tumble of politics as a Member of Parliament was something he would never have enjoyed, indeed it was a situation he would have instinctively avoided. Besides, had he had any inclination for a seat, and with the patronage he could count on from Rosebery and other Liberals, he would surely not have waited until he was almost sixty.

There was widespread belief that if he stood he would carry the seat and it is apparent from correspondence with Edward Marjoribanks that his appearance at Westminister as a Member was considered a real possibility.[2] Although he refused to be drawn into an election as a candidate he responded to Marjoribanks' appeal that he use his

1. St. Andrews Citizen, 7 June 1890.
2. St. Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 7631, letter from Edward Marjoribanks, 23 July 1890. The brother of Lady Aberdeen, he became 2nd Baron Tweedsmouth.

influence to bring the existing doubts and difficulties in the constituency to an end. Donaldson was consulted and deferred to about political meetings and speakers in the constituency[1] and, perhaps feeling some obligation to find a candidate since he himself had declined, it was he who interested Martin White of Balruddery near Dundee in the seat. The latter was freely mentioned as the candidate for the Burghs when he made his first political appearance in Donaldson's company at Pittenweem in late November. At one of Asquith's meetings at Leven a few weeks earlier, Donaldson had "carried the house by storm"[2], electrifying the audience before he had been five minutes on his feet and repeatedly interrupted by applause. "Principal Donaldson" the Dundee Advertiser reported, "advocated class legislation pure and simple for working men; and 'slogged' the Tories, present and absent, in a manner that would have rejoiced the heart of Mr. Labouchere[3], MP and would have delighted the Radical Party."[4]

Such was his standing among the Liberals and the response he drew from audiences at these political meetings, which he obviously enjoyed enormously, that the Advertiser believed it inevitable that either he would be compelled to stand himself or he would carry the candidate to whom he gave his backing. Donaldson was stll under strong pressure to stand. "It seems to be accepted opinion," wrote one Fife Liberal to another in November, "that with Principal Donaldson as our candidate,

1. Ibid: Ms 7706, letter from Edward Marjoribanks, 28 August, 1890.
2. Dundee Advertiser, 29 November 1890.
3. Henry Labouchere (1831-1912) MP for Northampton (1880-1906); the journalist-editor of Truth, he had a reputation for political gossip and as a go-between and intriguer.
4. Dundee Advertiser, 29 November 1890.

the seat is as good as won! and all the talk here is that a strong and united effort ought to be made to secure his assent. There is not two opinions that he is far and away the strongest possible candidate we could get within the United Kingdom."[1] Flattered he must have been but nonetheless he remained adamant in declining. The Advertiser, however, had accurately forecast the alternative for in September the following year Martin White was adopted as Liberal candidate for the St Andrews Burghs.[2]

That Donaldson was so heavily involved with the local Association in the St Andrews Burghs is not to suggest that he had become less interested in politics at a higher level. His correspondence with Rosebery had become less frequent but this was because things had changed for both of them. Since he moving to St Andrews Donaldson was fully occupied in managing a University beset with peculiar difficulties, which will be considered later. His situation was very different from earlier years; when he met Rosebery Donaldson had been at the High School for over twenty years by which time it had lost its challenge. Personalities such as Donaldson's maintain a momentum by stretching out to new challenges and when one is surmounted if another is not found, an ennui, a staleness, sets in. Rosebery had appeared on Donaldson's horizon at such a time, offering new and exciting challenges and an introduction to another world. Not only did Donaldson have much heavier commitments than he had known as a Professor at Aberdeen but in addition the Liberals were now out of power and this had been responsible for equally important changes affecting Rosebery.

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 8037, letter from Robert Oswald in Pittenweem to a Mr. Brown, 18 December 1890.
2. In the General Election the following year Martin White was defeated in the St Andrews Burghs. It was not until 1895 that he became an MP when he was elected as Liberal Member for Forfarshire.

The Liberal defeat in the summer of 1886 had shown Gladstone's support for Home Rule to have seriously damaged the unity of his Party and as each year in opposition passed the gravity of the schism became increasingly evident. Rosebery had also come to realize that Gladstone had no intention of resiging the leadership in the near future. And the Liberals were now facing the reality of several years in opposition. Of the political ends for which Donaldson had combined with Rosebery - the establishement of the Scotch Office, securing a position for Rosebery within the Cabinet and intriguing for the Premiership - the first had become a reality and the others, now that the Liberals were in opposition, ceased to have any relevance.

However the friendship which had grown between Donaldson and both Rosebery and Hannah in days of more intense political activity survived and he continued to be a welcome guest at Dalmeny and their other homes. As Donaldson faced the first Christmas as a widower alone at Castlegate, the Rosberys invited him to spend it with them in the familiar surroundings of Dalmeny and when Rosebery was entertaining the Prince of Wales[1] there in 1890 with the Duke of Edinburgh[2], the Duke of Fife[3] and Prince George,[4] Donaldson was invited. On his visits to London he was a frequent lunch and dinner guest at the Roseberys' when the conversation might range on the same occasion from the disestablishment of the Irish and Scottish Churches to Zola's La Terre and the state of French morals[5].

1. Later Edward VII (1842-1910).
2. Prince Alfred (1844-1900) 2nd son of Queen Victoria, only Duke of Edinburgh of this creation and Duke of Coburg and Gotha. He married Gd Dss Marie, only dau of Tsar Alexander II.
3. 1st Duke of Fife (1849-1912) m Pss Louise, the Pss Royal, eldest dau of Edward VII.
4. Later George V (1865-1936).
5. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Diaries.

In the week that Mary and he spent in London between returning from their honeymoon in Paris and travelling north they were three times at Berkeley Square, on the last occasion to meet the Duke and Dss of Connaught.[1]

The closeness between the Roseberys and the Donaldsons was evidenced only three months after Mary had come to live at Scores Park, when in October 1890 Hannah Rosebery became seriously ill at Dalmeny. On October 9 typhoid was diagnosed; on Saturday 11, the Donaldsons learned the news and that same day the Rosebery boys,[2] Harry, Lord Dalmeny who was ten and six year old Neil, arrived with their tutor to stay at Scores Park.[3] Mary was delighted to have the children, sharing their amusements and taking them putting on the Ladies Golf Course.[4]

The following Saturday, Donaldson took the boys to hear Gladstone and their father speak at the Corn Exchange in Edinburgh. Donaldson thought Gladstone's speech "a wonderful performance for such an old man! but we all thought that he had aged immensely . . . and the speech

1. Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught (1850-1942), third son of Queen Victoria, m Pss Louise of Prussia.
2. Harry, Lord Dalmeny (1882-1974) succeeded his father as 6th Earl of Rosebery and 2nd Earl of Midlothian. The Hon. Neil Primrose (b. 1884) was killed in Palestine in 1917.
3. J.J. Rhodes states that "the boys were staying at Barnbougle, the girls with Principal Donaldson in Edinburgh" while Rosebery's son-in-law, Crewe, merely recorded that two of the children, without specifying which, were sent "to Dr Donaldson's hospitable roof at St Andrews." It is clear from Donaldson's diary and letter that it was the boys who were sent to him, the two girls being cared for by Connie Leconfield at Barnbougle. R.R. James, Rosebery, p.226: Marquess of Crew, Lord Rosebery, (Lond., 1931)
4. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/132, 133, letter to Lord Rosebery, 23 October 1890.

was purely the speech of an agitator, not of a statesman. It was one that could rouse the masses to action, but it suggested no policy and rather fettered him, if he should come to power."[1] This patronising description had nothing of sympathy or compassion for a man now over eighty trying to lead a bitterly divided party. This might seem surprising, since Donaldson had ardently supported Gladstone's Home Rule policy, but time had done nothing to alter his belief that Rosebery had been kept out of the Cabinet for so long and his political career held back solely because of Gladstone's obstinacy. "You looked distracted and careworn," he told Rosebery, "but for all that your speech was admirable and you said exactly what should be said on such an occasion."[2] Donaldson and boys spent the night in Edinburgh and returned to St Andrews the following day.

Rosebery had cause to look distracted. From October 20 Hannah's condition rapidly deteriorated; Rosebery was warned that her death was imminent and the same day the boys were hastily summoned home from Scores Park. This crisis passed but the fatal course of the disease could not be averted: Rosebery had not been told that Hannah was also suffering from Bright's Disease and could not hope to survive the typhoid for long. With Hannah's condition so grave, one cannot but wonder what Rosebery must have thought to receive a letter from Donaldson declaring, "You are the only man that can save the country."[3] The state of the nation and her Empire was now totally displaced from Rosebery's mind. Days of acute anxiety, of alternating hopes and fears,

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid: Ms 10014/136, letter to Lord Rosebery, 11th November 1890.
3. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/136, letter to Lord Rosebery, 11 November 1890.

succeeded one another; on 17 November the end was visibly close and before dawn on the morning of 19 November, Hannah Rosebery died. Donaldson left immediately for Dalmeny.

"My own sweet wife . . . I miss you dreadfully," he wrote to Mary the following day, "Last night when I came to be all alone I so much wished that I had you beside me to talk everything over and I thought how very great a blessing you are to me"[1] That same day, he travelled into Edinburgh on business for Rosebery. The capital was quiet for it was the Sabbath and he wrote Mary again from the University Club; "I grudge every day I am away from you"[2] he told her and confided to her the difficulties Rosebery was facing over the jewish ceremonies. Rosebery had always accorded Hannah's religion the greatest respect and it deeply grieved him that at her death it should form a gulf. Her jewish friends wished her to be buried beside her parents at Willesden, in London, but both her husband and Donaldson were convinced that Hannah had wished to be buried at Dalmeny. Donaldson recalled how Hannah, on learning that she was dying, told him of her "satisfaction that there is nothing in the Scotch form of religion to prevent her resting with your (Rosebery's) family."[3] Grief stricken and bereft, Rosebery yielded to jewish opposition to Hannah being buried in ground not consecrated for jewish burials and agreed to her being buried at Willesden "on the understanding that she might be removed to Mentmore

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6335, letter to Mary Donaldson, 20 November 1890.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6336, letter to Mary Donaldson, 20 November 1890.
3. NLS: Rosebery Papers, letter to Lord Rosebery.

or Dalmeny when he (Rosebery) sees fit".[1] It was with a heavy heart that Donaldson travelled home from London, arriving in St Andrews to find the first snow on the ground.

While in life Rosebery could be irritated by Hannah's devotion - almost infatuation - which in his presence was clear for all to see, only after her death did he fully appreciate all that she had been in his life, the support and encuragement which she had never failed to give, and from her death he never fully recovered. For a long time he withdrew completely from public life but in his sorrow and loneliness he was not unmindful of the close friendship which Donaldson and Hannah had shared and the following year he sent him s pair of silver candle-sticks as a keepsake.[2] For to Donaldson, Hannah Rosebery had shone as the evening star and her death at thirty seven was an immeasurable grief. With Rosebery his relationship was one of serious politics and their machinations but that with Hannah was simpler. His was an almost paternal affection for a woman who, although so immensely wealthy, retained from her - even by Victorian standards - restricted unbringing and deficient education something of the ingénue and Donaldson's simple and constant demeanour was in sharp contrast to her temperamentally unstable and often difficult husband. The evenings when he would read Herodatus to her on the sofa[3] or in his amusing way instruct her in Scottish history, had ended. He had also lost a treasured correspondent.

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, M 3663, letter to Mary Donaldson, 20 November 1890.
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10013/145, letter to Lord Rosebery, 16 August, 1891.
3. The Letters of J.S. Blackie to His Wife, Ed. A.S. Stoddard, (Edin. & Lond., 1909) p.318.

Regrettably none of the letters between Hannah and Donaldson has survived: with Hannah as châtelaine, Lansdowne House and later 38 Berkeley Square became the social headquarters of Liberalism and her letters cannot but have yielded an valuable insight into Liberal politics and social life in the 1880s and Donaldson's would have complemented those he wrote to Rosebery. Donaldson and Hannah wrote to each other frequently[1] and he treasured and carefully preserved all her letters as he did Rosebery's. The importance he attached to these can be estimated from the provision in his will whereby all his papers were bequeathed to St Andrews University with the express exception of the letters he had received from Lord and Lady Rosebery, which were to be returned to Rosebery. On Donaldson's death in 1915, Rosebery's were duly returned but Hannah's could not immediately be found and on being informed of this, Rosebery intimated that he believed he had received them some years before and destroyed them[2]. Ultimately, Hannah's letter were found and returned. The letters Rosebery had received from Donaldson, he deposited in the National Library of Scotland but there is no trace of either the letters of Donaldson to Hannah or those from Hannah and Rosebery to Donaldson. Since he believed in 1915 that he had destroyed them, this may be taken as an expression of intent, more especially when Rosebery destroyed, soon after Hannah's death, all the letters they had written to each other.

1. Donaldson's letters to Rosebery are full of references to having just written to her or just received a letter from her.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Executory Papers.

The loss of the letters between Hannah and Donaldson has the consequence that their relationship can only be gauged by tangential references but that there was something in this relationship which distinguished it from the relationship Donaldson had with other women friends, there can be no doubt. After her death Hannah's presence remained real to Rosebery - for the remainder of his life he would add books to her library - and of her memory he was not only protective but resolved that it should be enshrined. If the letters Hannah received from Donaldson equalled in their expressions of admiration and devotion those Rosebery himself received he must have decided that this was a relationship that posterity was to know nothing of. There may also have been a more complex reason.

Rosebery had taken Hannah's selfless adoration and impetuous enthusiam for anything that touched his life so much for granted while she lived and it was only after her death that he appreciated the qualities she possessed in which he was most deficient; she had great tact and common sense, she alone could persuade him to do what he had no inclination to do and she had without qualification given him the sympathy and understanding which had been so lacking in his childhood and adolescence. Now totally bereft without her, he may have remembered those times when he had expressed his irritation or impatience at some demonstration of her devotion or misinterpreted her efforts for his advancement. The grief which overwhelmed him and caused him to withdraw completely from both political and social life may have had in its composition not a little of guilt and remorse which he could never

assuage: "love, such as my wife's cannot perish;" he wrote in reply to the Queen's condolence, "it is with me as much as my skin or the air I breathe."[1] Whatever his feelings had been for Hannah while she lived, after her death the world was to be convinced that theirs was indeed l'amour éternal. R.R. James suggests that Hannah Rosebery had been "following nervously in Rosebery's footsteps throughout their married life, utterly devoted but consumed with alarm lest she make some dreadful mistake."[1]: the consciousness of this intellectual inequality left an unsatisfied emotional need for total devotion and total emotional fulfilment need not be mutually inclusive terms. The personalities of this dramatis personae lend credibility to the hypothesis that Donaldson - a man twenty years Hannah's senior, sharing her admiration and devotion for her husband and whose equitable temperament was such a contrast to her husband's unpredictable oscillations - filled an emotional void in her life. Before Hannah died, Donaldson had a double link to any of the Rosebery homes; his relationships with this husband and wife, while to a considerable degree separate, had also been complementary, the sum of the whole exceeding that of two individual relationships. Her death ended one and simultaneously something of the other. This may be partly the reason why Donaldson's letters were noticably fewer after the end of 1890. Yet he had no intention that his association with Rosebery should wither and become only a memory of the past. For a decade now, he had been convinced that Rosebery was destined for the premiership; determinedly he still wrote to the noble lord but his letters were no longer the one half of an ongoing correspondence.

1. R.R.James, Rosebery, (Lond., 1963), quoted on p.227.

If Donaldson's hopes that in 1894 the University would enter into a period of greater harmony were to be misplaced he had no doubts that the brilliant prospect of Rosebery as Prime Minister, which he had predicted since the heady Midlothian Campaigns, was now to be translated into a glorious fulflment, for the dayspring was at hand when both the leadership of the Liberal Party and the Premiership would be his. Time and chance, however, which had met with such happy results for Donaldson were now, for Rosebery, to have a much less felicitous encounter.

The relations between the grand Old Man and Rosebery had become increasingly ambiguous and strained: Gladstone had valued Rosebery's support when the latter was an eager disciple, attracting enormous electoral support for the Party and admiring of its leader but this amity had weathered badly for Rosebery was impatient for promotion and Gladstone, while from time to time tantalizingly suggesting that he might imminently retire, retained the leadership with exasperating tenacity. When he would retire and who his successor might be were subjects of continuing political speculation. Rosebery remained maddeningly ambivalent about public office but Donaldson was determined that he must not be allowed to lose sight of the glittering prize. In August 1891 Donaldson relayed the news that while at Haddo Ishbel Aberdeen "said that Mr G was disappointed you did not come oftener to him and give him your aid and advice. He had named you his successor", and added, pregnant with meaning, "He does not wish to have much to do with Sir W(illiam) H(arcourt)."[1] However reliable Ishbel's political gossip, this was only hearsay but Donaldson had been the recipient of similar intelligence from Gladstone himself, for the now eighty

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/145, letter to Lord Rosebery, 16 August 1891. Sir W.V. Harcourt (1827-1904) was at this time Chancellor of the Exchequer (1892-95), a position he had previously held in 1886.

two year old leader had spent a day among the Party faithful at Haddo while Donaldson was there. "He said that Morley[1] as well as himself recognized the fact that you are the only fit man to be leader. At least several representative people to whom I have spoken have said that it would be disastrous if he (WH) were to be leader, but that his leadership is an impossibility."[2] Donaldson knew that, apart from Rosebery, the only probable contenders for the leadership were Harcourt and Morley; confident that Morley advocated Rosebery and that Harcourt as Premier was an impossibility he had no doubts that the leadership - when eventually Gladstone retired - was a foredrawn conclusion. But at times it seemed that Gladstone would go on forever.

Then late in 1893, Spencer, First Lord of the Admiralty, advocated an increase in the naval programme which Gladstone strenuously opposed and a serious rift developed. Although not directly involved, Rosebery as Foreign Secretary strongly supported the proposed increases, convinced and that they were essential for the maintenance of British influence and prestige in the Mediterranean. As the opposition within the Government was gradually converted to the necessity for the increased Estimates, the end of the year witnessed Gladstone alone in his antagonism to them. When 1894 began, Gladstone's last Cabinet was moving inexorably towards disintegration and eventually he had to be told that his long reign was over. The succession, however, was to be neither smooth nor sweet. Harcourt, far from seeing his leadership as an impossibility, was resolved that the Premiership should be his while Morley announced that he had no intention of supporting Rosebery's claims and was as

1. John Morley (1825-1923) was Chief Secretary for Ireland (1892-95) as he had been in 1886. He was one of the prominent Liberals who found a safe seat in Scotland, representing the Montrose Burghs 1896-1908.

2. Ibid:

covetous of the Premiership as Harcourt. Donaldson knew all the contenders and realised that, Gladstone and Rosebery excepted, Harcourt and Morley were the only Liberals in whom the public took any interest but he believed that "each is dreadfully lacking in some elements of character which are essential to leadership."[1] Certainly Harcourt's genial but too often overbearing manner andMorley's small mindedness ensured that neither commanded sufficient support to secure the leadership and the ensuing dogfight between them, before the Queen invited Rosebery to form a Government on March 3, proved an ill omen for the success of his administration, aggravating the disharmonies already existing among the Liberal ranks and particularly within the Cabinet, for defeat mortified Harcourt and embittered Morley. Such a situation would have been fraught with difficulties for any Prime Minister but were accentuated now for Rosebery, whose Government was in office solely by the grace of the Irish Vote, vigorously assailed by the solid and more united Unionist opposition and maintaining its position only by the most fragile majorities; it was indeed a "bleak, precarious and wasting inheritance"[2] that Rosebery at last fell heir to in the spring of 1894.

Donaldson had no misgivings: any Government so fortunate as to have Rosebery as its leader could not be other than a dizzling apotheosis and with immense pleasure he now addressed his friend as "My dear Premier" and would continue to do so for the remainder of his life. Even in Edinburgh days, Donaldson had been restrained in calls on Rosebery's patronage, he had never pestered Rosebery in this way although he had on occasion invoked his influence - a Government position for

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/158, letter to Lord Rosebery, 26 November 1891.
2. W.S. Churchill, Great Contemporaries, (Lond., 1937) p.23.

one of Schmitz' friends, a Deputy Lord Lieutenancy for someone else. Now that Rosebery was Prime Minister his powers of patronage were greatly increased and, Donaldson believed, existed to be utilised. When at the end of 1894 Dufferin and Ava's term at the Embassy in Rome ended, Donaldson sought the Ambassadorship for his friend, Lord Reay.[1] Donaldson and Reay had been friends since at least 1880, perhaps earlier, and Donaldson had in the years before Reay was appointed Governor of Bombay in 1885, been a frequent guest at their home, Laidlawstiel, near Galashiels, and at their London house in Gt Stanhope Street. No one pretended that, even in the closing years of the nineteenth century, Ambassadors - Britain had fewer than a dozen Embassies - were overworked, pursuing their unhurried diplomacy through bouts de papier and flawless manners but they required the knowledge and experience to meet, with the obligatory sangfroid Anglais, any sudden developments in the international situation which might affect Britain's interest. Reay, who that year had been appointed Under Secretary of State for India, had no experience of European diplomacy and Donaldson revealed an astonishing naivety when he urged Rosebery to appoint Reay to Rome because:

> "Rome would be exactly the place for him. Lord Dufferin told me that he had almost nothing to do there but to look after the interests of the English people, principally in the way of entertainment. There are no political complications, no jealousies to be treated lightly, in fact no questions of supreme moment between England and Italy. He could therefore start easily . . . " 2.

Rosebery failed to be impressed by this novel argument that Reay was the perfect candidate for a position in which there was nothing

1. 11th Baron Reay and Baron Mackay d'Ophemert in Holland, (1839-1921) had been Governor of Bombay 1885-90 and was Under Secretary of State for India 1894-5. Donaldson was also on terms of close friendship with Lady Reay with whom he maintained an extensive correspondence.
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/168, letter to Lord Rosebery, 19 December 1894.

to do nor is this surprising for the Prime Minister was preoccupied with grave and intractable difficulties which ultimately, and within only a few months, would overwhelm him. His political fortunes, singularly ill-starred on his assumption of the leadership, had progressively worsened and the prospect was no more auspicious as 1895 began. The disagreements, personal jealousies and animosities within the Cabinet which had been his inheritance, deepened; Harcourt, knowing no loyalty to Rosebery, harried him relentlessly while the bickering and sniping between the other Ministers knew no respite - Rosebery's position, difficult in the beginning, was rapidly rendered intolerable. Incapable of reconciling the rifts and feuds - often irreconcilable - he was unable to unify his ill-assorted team and hold it together while week by week the morale within the Party fell ever lower. Donaldson had been swift to declaim the flaws he perceived in the characters of Harcourt and Morley when measured in the context of leadership but he believed, like some article of faith, that Rosebery was without blemish. A more detached and objective observer would soon have realised that this was conspicuously at variance with reality but Donaldson's devotion to Rosebery, bordering on idolatry, proved inaccessible to disillusion about the true state of Rosebery's Government or his capacity for the office. "Lord Rosebery is getting on wonderfully well with his difficult task," Donaldson was confidently assuring Aberdeen, now Governor General of Canada, in March 1895. "It is very hard to manage a Cabinet which he has not selected and for some of whom he would have found better and abler substitutes. But he has kept the party well together. And there is a hopeful spirit among all the Liberals here."[1]

1. Haddo Hse Mss: NRA (Scot) Box 1/6, letter to Lord Aberdeen, 5 March 1895.

The hopeful spirit which Donaldson discerned was not widely evident and proved noticably absent when, only three months later, a snap vote found the Government in the minority. The Cabinet was confronted with the choice between resigning, seeking a dissolution or struggling on and preparing for an election at the earliest possible date. Despite the knowledge that a sudden resignation with no united rallying cry and only half the session completed would be electorally disastrous, Rosebery, worn out with the intrigues, embittered recriminations and often unfair criticism, resigned. In the following month, July, the General Election swept the Conservatives back to power with a majority of 152. The Liberals had sustained the worse defeat of any party since 1832. In the brief span of fifteen months the splendid vision of a Rosebery Premiership had perished, the Party crushingly defeated, disunited and cast out into opposition which would last for a decade. The terrible irony of the situation was that the very features which had so strongly attracted Donaldson to Rosebery were those which had substantially contributed to the debâcle. Donaldson had seen in Rosebery the grand siegneur, the resplendent personage, gifted and eloquent, elevated above ordinary men. He was indeed a meteoric and brilliant star lighting the late Victorian firmament, a survivor of that vanishing oligarcic world where great nobles guided the affairs of state as their birthright, but the cast of mind which these conditions nurtured was unsympathetic to the spirit of the new age. Destiny had ordained that Rosebery would be a peer but it was fate that by an early accession to the Rosebery honours he was denied the possibility of any political experience in the Commons. His position as Premier was made more difficult by being a peer

yet it is doubtful whether he would have felt inclined to avail himself of the opportunity to sit in the Commons had such been open to him. Rosebery was an anachronism, being closer in temperament and outlook to the Whig aristocrats of a past age "who had been accustomed to govern in circumstances where their own estimation of the national interest was the primary factor and governmental action was not expected to be directed 'from below'".[1]

It was true that Rosebery sought the palm but it would be unfair to say that he avoided the dust, rather that his path through life was destined never to encounter it. The rough and tumble, the cut and thrust of the Commons was something he never knew, yet such deficiency in political experience cannot by itself account for the disaster of his Premiership. The reason lay largely within himself: his proud and at times supercilious temperament made him incapable of concessions and compromises, denying him the resilient flexibility and capacity to accommodate the demands of the ebb and flow of politics which were later to carry Baldwin with remarkable success through not wholly dissimilar trials and circumstances. Noble in intent, honest in the pursuit of what he believed to be right, Rosebery was not only ill equipped but unable to accept what were now the necessities of modern democracy and the exigencies of the party system - as Churchill, observed with admirable economy, "He would not stoop; he did not conquer".[2]

Rosebery in opposition was waiting only for an opportunity to resign the leadership also and when in the autumn of 1896 Gladstone

1. D.A. Hamer, Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery, (Oxf., 1972), p.37.
2. W.S. Churchill, Great Contemporaries, (Lond., 1973) p.19.

re-emerged from retirement with a tremendous speech against the Armenian massacres, reminiscent of Midlothian days, the leadership seemed to be in dispute again. Opposed to the Liberal policy favouring intervention against Turkey, Rosebery resigned, resolved to retire from politics forever. Donaldson wrote to him immediately expressing the hope that he would resolutely say nothing of his future plans or yield to any urgent requests to return. "The country is speaking strongly in your favour," he told him on 14 October, "and it will no doubt become your duty to return to the leadership."[1] In the past, from the earliest days of their friendship Donaldson had plied Rosebery with constant assurances that he was the messianic leader for whom the Party and the country were awaiting, now he was assuring him of a second coming. It was Donaldson, not Rosebery, who could not come to terms with the disaster; for Donaldson it was essential that Rosebery retain the leadership, only then could he avoid the reality that Rosebery would never be Prime Minister again, that the hopes of so many years had indeed come to nought. But Rosebery was sick at heart with politics and his inglorious period as Premier must to some extent have driven home to him his limitations for the position. It was with relief rather than regret that, only too gladly, he laid down his burden - the last thing he wanted now was to be assured that he would suffer such travail again. Donaldson remained oblivious to the fact that he was urging his friend to resume a position which he no longer wanted, yet more than a year later he was still reassuring the former Premier that everyone he knew regarded his "resignation as temporary, whatever you may think of it. The hour will demand the man."[2]

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/194, letter to Lord Rosebery, 14 October 1896.
2. Ibid: Ms 10014/195, letter to Lord Rosebery, 15 November 1897.

The hour, however, would never demand Rosebery again: he was not yet fifty when he retired from the political stage and in the following thirty three years which were vouchsafed to him, he never again held any political office. Had Rosebery's Premiership been earlier, before the disintegration of the Liberal Party had been initiated, had it been longer in duration and happier in spirit, it is not without interest to speculate the niche Donaldson may have found - even made - for himself. He would have revelled in being an intimate of the Prime Minister in Downing Street and he might well have developed a rôle founded on his special relationship with, and usefulness to, the Prime Minister of the sort which would later be reserved for Horace Wilson at the side of Baldwin and Chamberlain and for "Prof" Lindemann in Churchill's wartime ménâge. If Donaldson cherished any such hopes they were dashed irretrievably when Rosebery resigned from the leadership and progressively alienated himself from the Party. As it was Donaldson was little in evidence at Number 10 during Rosebery's brief occupancy for his energies were wholly occupied coping with a refractory situation at home in St Andrews.

# CHAPTER 12.

When Donaldson assumed the responsibilities of Senior Principal in the autumn of 1886 all the Scottish Universities - and none more than St Andrews - were on the threshold of extensive changes for if they were to meet the requirements of the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth, reform could not be long delayed. Although the Report of the 1876 Commission had failed to bring about any legislative intervention to implement its recommendations, as the years passed and the necessity for changes became increasingly apparent, a growing demand made itself felt for the appointment of an Executive Commission.[1] Eventually in 1883 Rosebery, generally sympathetic to the difficulties of the Scottish Universities and at that time responsible for Scottish affairs, introduced a Bill. The Universities were aghast when they discovered that it was proposed to establish a Commission with wide powers to remodel their Constitutions, effectively removing the whole matter from Parliamentary discussion. Moreover, with special reference to St Andrews, the Commission was empowered to dissolve any of the Faculties and affiliate other Colleges to the University. It was required to prepare within a year a special report on whether or not the University should be closed down altogether. The outcry was predictable.

Donaldson followed the progress of this University legislation with the keenest interest. A Bill was introduced almost annually through the eighties, those in 1883 and the succeeding two years never survived

1. There was increasing support for flexibility in the arts curriculum and the introduction of an honours system. The question of an entrance examination proved more controversial and in this connection one of the greatest difficulties created by the 1858 Act was highlighted. Any unilateral action was strewn with problems since any University might object to Ordinances or amendments proposed by another, a system virtually guaranteeing endless delays alternating with periods of total deadlock.

as far as a second reading and in 1886 the political scene was totally dominated by Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule; what little hope remained of a Bill being passed that year disappeared when the Government decided to give priority to the Crofters Act.

The Bill introduced in 1888 - which differed little from that eventually enacted the following year - substantially met the reformer's demands.[1] This Bill actually got as far as the Lords, further than any of its predecessors, and expectations that it would be enacted were so high that consideration was being given to the appointment of a Chairman for the Commission which would be established. Lord Lothian[2], Secretary of State for Scotland, proposed Rosebery to the Cabinet but was peremptorily turned down; he quickly confided the news of this development to Donaldson, confessing that he had considered resigning in protest. Donaldson, of course, lost no time in reporting this setback to Rosebery and identified the villain as the Prime Minister. There had been an "absolute veto" when Rosebery's name was submitted and it "came out eventually that it was Lord Salisbury and Lord Salisbury alone that put the absolute veto."[3]

Lothian evidently knew that Donaldson had an interest in Rosebery being appointed and may indeed have proposed Rosebery at Donaldson's instigation: Donaldson's letter certainly suggests that Rosebery knew

1. Changes were to be made to the powers of the University Courts and Senates as described on p378: in addition there was provision for any College to be affiliated to any of the Universities by mutual agreement and for any College so affiliated to be directly represented on the University Council.

2. 9th Marquess of Lothian (1838-1900) Secretary for Scotland (1887-92).

3. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/114, letter to Lord Rosebery, 25 May, 1888.

that his name was being put forward. That Rosebery would have liked the appointment there can no doubt: he was genuinely interested in Universities[1] and learning, and following in the footsteps of his great grandfather, the third Earl, who had been Chairman of the 1826 Commission, appealed to him. Rosebery must have been disappointed and Donaldson no less. Certainly, Rosebery's appointment might have been to St Andrews advantages but Salisbury was an astute politician and he may well have been convinced that Rosebery's personality was not such as would be likely to facilitiate the working of such a commission for although immensely charming when he felt inclined he could suddenly affect a glacial aristocratic hauteur; exhibiting either patience or forbearance towards those for whom he felt little liking or who differed from his views was not his forte. He had neither the spirit of concession nor compromise to deal with the ruffled feathers of Professors. In addition, if the other Universities believed that St Andrews, the smallest by far, enjoyed a favoured relationship with the Commission as a result of the Principal's known friendship with the Chairman, if the resentment and animus towards Donaldson which had been evident in 1882 were repeated, it could only be to the detriment of the functioning of the Commission.

Consideration of a chairman in 1888 proved premature for the Bill was never enacted but the following year the Universities (Scotland) Act was at last passed by the Conservative Government. Now it was evident that Salisbury's implacable opposition to Rosebery being appointed Chairman was grounded on the latter's personality and not

1. Rosebery was to have the rare distinction of being elected Rector of all four Scottish Universities.

his politics for the Government appointed a Liberal and former Lord Advocate, J.B. Balfour[1]; partly because he was considered the best legal mind available but also the Conservatives were anxious to demonstrate that they placed efficiency over any considerations of narrow party gain. The Act succeeded in settling the fundamental constitutional problems: the University Courts were enlarged and made responsible for the property and revenues of the Universities; the Senates became responsible only for academic matters and discipline. As in 1858, most of the essentially educational changes were entrusted to the Commission appointed by the Act. Under the Chairmanship of Lord Kinross, as Balfour became, the Commission remained in existence until 1897, during which time it approved 189 Ordinances concerning changes to the arts degree, the introduction of an entrance examination, the establishement of new Chairs, the expansion of non-professorial staff and the restructuring of bursaries. Changes were introduced in the medical and law degrees, a Faculty of Science founded in each University, and the provision for research students and doctoral degrees by thesis was a recognition that the Universities had an important research function. These were matters affecting all the Universities but St Andrews was still singled out for special attention. Although reference to possible dissolution had been dropped the Commission might yet dissolve any of the Faculties and the provision for the affiliation of other Colleges was preserved. The painful consequence of this affiliation clause, made specifically with the recently founded University College Dundee in mind, were for the next decade to dominate the history of a University already in dire straits.

1. Balfour again was appointed Lord Advocate by the next Liberal Government (1892-95), during which period he retained the Chairmanship of the Commission.

The University to which Donaldson came in 1886 and to which he was to devote the remaining years of his life - almost three decades - had the distinction of being - although the smallest - the oldest in Scotland. While the University had survived the instability of the seventeenth century, it emerged in 1689 with its revenues greatly depleted. "If we now had all the revenues which were bestowed on us by our munificent founders and benefactors of ancient time," Donaldson observed when he arrived, "our Colleges would be very rich indeed and our University would be much richer than it is."[1] This was wishful thinking for although it was true that the Colleges would have been much better off than they now were, they had never enjoyed adequate endowments. With resources sadly depleted the University was reduced perennially to the brink of bankruptcy. St Andrews shared the problems of the other Universities but whereas these had derived some stimulus from their location in developing centres responding to the quickening of commercial, industrial and intellectual life, the north east corner enjoyed no such advantage. Indeed there were a number of factors peculiar to St Andrews which aggravated its difficulties and prejudiced its development. The Church had been the University's greatest benefactor, its patronage nurturing the University in its early years, but its importance to the University had disappeared long ago. Besides, as Scotland experienced major economic reorganisation, the larger centres assumed increasing importance. St Andrews became a backwater, increasingly more isolated from the mainstreams of Scottish life. The intellectual distinction which had earned it renown in former days ebbed away, while the University's material decay was everywhere apparent.

1. James Donaldson, University Addresses, (Edin., 1911), p.20. Address 2 November 1886.

This slow, but relentless, decline continued until by the 1870s such deep despondency had settled over the University that its continued viability was questioned. The suggestion that it be dissolved, its Professors and students, together with its meagre endowments distributed among the other Scottish Universities, was not surprising[1] - the finances were always precarious and in "the dreadful year of 1876"[2] there were barely 130 students.

That year, Professor Heddle, who held the Chemistry Chair at St Andrews, summed up the grievous state of the University before the Royal Commission. It was, he believed, "in an exceedingly critical position, both as regards its very life, and also the feeling of the public towards a University having so few students . . . the country will look upon St Andrews - I put it plainly - as a sinking ship."[3] This was ten years before Donaldson assumed the Principalship but by 1886 such improvement as there had been was so small as to provide no encouragement for the future. Faced with the likelihood of extinction many of the professoriate recognized that the University's survival might be ensured by some sort of union with the recently formed University College, Dundee. Heddle had stated frankly what not all his colleagues would have had the courage to acknowledge. The choice, he announced was "Dundee or death . . . if we could be transferred to Dundee I believe we would live and perhaps flourish; but if not, I think we will gradually cease to exist."[4] The historical association

1. As early as 1697 the Chancellor, John, Marquess of Tullibardine, had urged that the University be relocated at Perth.
2. R.G. Cant, St. Andrews University, (Edin. & Lond., 1970), p.120.
3. 1876 Royal Commission on Scottish Universities, Report Vol. II, 1878, p.276.
4. Ibid.

with St Andrews was too strong to allow support for relocating the University but the attractions of union with Dundee seemed sensible and obvious - the University would be enabled to increase, and round out, the subjects taught - Dundee had infirmaries, essential for clinical teaching, which St Andrews with its small population could never hope to support - and attract more students.

Nor would the advantage be one-sided; the Dundee College also had reason to evince interest in such an arrangement. It was the only major city in Scotland without a University but there was not the most remote possibility of the Government being persuaded to establish one there. Prominent citizens in the town were increasingly aware of this deficiency and eventually in 1882 public subscription made possible the founding of University College. The first students were admitted in the autumn of 1883 but the early years were not without problems. The College struggled with financial difficulties, made worse by the number of students failing to increase as quickly as had been anticipated. A significant factor in this situation was that the College could not induce students to enrol with the prospect of a degree. Union with Dundee would remove this handicap; by enabling the students to enrol at a University a degree would be brought within their reach. The conclusion was irresistible - since both the College and the University had something the other not only wanted but badly needed, union promised mutual advantage. The provisions of the Act arose from the goverment's recognition of this and a genuine wish to facilitate it but making good intentions a reality presented Donaldson with difficulties on a scale that no one could have anticipated.

In the Bills introduced before June 1888, the provisions relating to St Andrews were clear - the Commissioners were entrusted with full powers to settle all the issues which might arise. This arrangement had Donaldson's wholehearted approval, believing the only way to determine the questions which would undoubtedly be encountered was to vest the Commissioners with plenary powers. The section of the Bill concerning St Andrews was drafted as follows:

> ". . . the Commissioners shall, with respect to the University and Colleges of St Andrews and the University College of Dundee, have powers to make ordinances . . . as regards the University College of Dundee and for affiliating it to, or incorporating it in, the said University."

However, in the Bill introduced in 1888 and that of the following year, which was enacted, phrases were introduced which were to expose the section to ambiguity. The Commissioners were now authorised to "affiliate the said University and to make it form part of the said University with the consent of the University Court of St Andrews, and also of the said College . . ."

At first it had been assumed that the Commissioners would prepare the terms of the union and then seek the approval of the University and the College but what actually happened was quite different, for the Commissioners expected the University and the College to prepare the terms of the agreement between themselves. Already there were difficulties in construing sections of the Act and since Donaldson was subsequently to be blamed for undue haste in preparing the Agreement by those who were opposed later to the union, it is instructive that he sought the advice of the Chairman of the Commission, who replied

unhelpfully that "it would hardly be proper for me to express any opinion as to the construction and effect of the Act"[1]. Confronted with such a response, and since there was a real urgency that the terms be agreed to as soon as possible,[2] Donaldson had no realistic alternative but to press forward with the Agreement.

Although each party demonstrated a certain wariness - reflecting the imbalance between a long established University and a small, but aspiring College - there was a general willingness to come to an agreement and on 15 February 1890 both the University and the College executed an Agreement embodying the terms on which the College was willing "to be affiliated to and made to form part of" the University. At this point doubt arose as to whether the Commission could proceed to give the Agreement legal force - and thus effect an Affiliation - without an Ordinance, which could only be made by an Order in Council but eventually it was agreed that the Commission could effect the union by an Order which it could make itself.

"The said Union", the Senate resolved," shall, as regards duration, be permanent, and dissoluble only by an Act of Parliament." We may read this as a declaration of confidence in the union but by failing to make any provision for resolving differences, should they arise, one of the major causes of strife had been created - albeit unwittingly - for had the union been effected by an Ordinance, and subsequently proved unsuccessful, it would only have required an Ordinance for the union to be dissolved. The act had authorised the Commissioners to "affiliate

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6667, letter from Lord Kinross, 16 September 1889.
2. Until the matter of the union had been determined the new University Court, provided for by the 1889 Act, could not be constituted.

the said University College to, and make it form part of, the said University . . ." and the parties did not doubt that this had now been achieved. When the University Court met on 18 April that year, a Sealed Declaration was received from the Commissioners that the new University Court was constituted. The Commissioners also intimated that they intended to provide, by an Ordinance, for two representatives from the Dundee College to be members of the Court, whereupon the Court amicably invited the College to send two representatives to its next meeting, even although the Ordinance requiring them to so so had not yet been made. Donaldson believed that the changes in the drafting had made the task before the Commission almost impossible[1] but now it seemed that all his forebodings had been unfounded.

All seemed set fair for the union and his attention was now claimed by another provision of the Act, which established a committee to report on whether any changes should be made as to the subscription of religious tests for Principals, Professors and other University Officers. The imposition of a test dated from the reign of Queen Anne when it had been considered necessary "for securing the Protestant Religion and Protestant Government but there had been an increasing feeling for many years that the real purpose of the test in the latter part of the nineteenth century was the retention and support of a traditional system of belief.

Donaldson's evidence before the Committee expressed his liberal outlook and total absence of prejudice in religious matters. Since his disillusionment with the Congregational Church and his rejection

1. James Donaldson, University Addresses, (Edin., 1911), p.160. In his address on 14 April 1892 Donaldson set out his misgivings about the changes introduced.

of restrictions on theological enquiry which he had encountered at New College he never again exhibited an exclusive fidelity to any denomination: he married his first wife in the Congregational Church and the second in the Church of England; in St Andrews he attended the Church of Scotland and had no hesitation in appointing a Romanist of Jesuit inclination as organist in the University Chapel of St Salvator. During his visits to London he demonstrated equally catholic taste; it was not unusual for him to go to a revivalist meeting one Sunday and Salvation Army the next or listen to Cardinal Manning. To the cynical of the late twentieth century such catholicity might appear less a testament of genuine faith and denominational tolerance than a policy of convenience and concession to that important determinant of Victorian behavior, appearances. Such construction would be easy but inaccurate; his faith was profound and with a breadth of erudition which secured independence from any denominational expression. Yet neither was he of the "unco guid"; his diary jotting of Revivalist and Salvationist meetings he attended and of the theological arguments in which he became involved - and in which he could more than hold his own - are recorded with the greatest good humour and leave the unmistakable impression that he had enjoyed himself enormously.

Donaldson had been in Aberdeen in 1882 at the time of the famous heresy trial of Robertson Smith, a Professor at the Free Church College, for whom Donaldson had not only infinite sympathy but had not hesitated to advertise his support. Smith had published an account of the current position of Hebrew scholarship which had earned him the implacable wrath of the Free Church. Donaldson could find no grounds for doubting Smith's orthodoxy nor any evidence that he had ever said anything

contrary to the Confession of Faith. "What," Donaldson had asked, "was his offence then? It was that he had studied Hebrew and Hebrew literature according to the scientific or critical method of the nineteenth century."[1] To this highly emotional controversy, Donaldson brought a rational and objective analysis. "I have not investigated the special opinions which he has promulgated, and he may be right or wrong in regard to them, but they are all distinctly within the limits of the new method, and it is the method that really formed the centre of attack."[2] He saw the Free Church Assembly intent on suppressing this new learning which it considered dangerous and troublesome. Donaldson condemned such a policy no less now than he had thirty years earlier at New College and his scathing indictment was not confined to the Free Church but to organised churches in general and sets out in uncompromising terms his attitude to them.

> "It means that all honest inquiry shall take place outside the Church, that the Church shall become more and more bigoted and ignorant, and that in the end the paganism of unbelievers shall be more tolerant, more honest, more charitable than the so-called Christianity of an ignorant Church, wise in its own conceit." 3.

It was consequently predictable that Donaldson would voice his unqualified opposition to a religious test, assuring the Committee that its imposition was totally unrealistic and ineffectual; indeed he believed it to be counter productive since "tests do not comple a man to think, but they compel a man not to utter his thoughts - not to utter them widely - not to let them to known . . . I think, if there is free

1. James Donaldson, "On Some Defects in the Educational Organisation of Scotland", in Contemporary Review, January 1882, p.153.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid, p.154.

inquiry and free publication, in that case there will be much more sympathy and more honesty between the community and the leaders of the churches."1

This situation - tending as it did to repress the expression of new ideas and inhibit the spread of the fruits of scholastic research, to the detriment of learning - and the evident impossibility of devising a test which could be binding were the grounds for his urging that, without exception, tests should be abolished. Furthermore, Donaldson could find no argument to persuade him that it was in any way desirable in a University to attempt to impose a creed on Professors. "They sign" he pointed out, "with a general concurrence in it; they do not sign absolutely."[2] It has been his experience that a man subscribed to a test and subsequently his ideas to some extent changed in which case "he does not go through with any inquiry but remains quiet, and it is only rarely that a case come up in which you have full inquiry of the man and the result was "a remarkable thing that in Scottish theology. . . we have very few books of investigation though if you know the men, you know they are remarkably well able to investigate."[3]

As Donaldson saw it, a test could never secure more than the appearance of orthodoxy; it suppressed the expression of individual thought and scholarship which was damaging to the integrity of the Universities and since many of the teachers of thelogy differed widely from the test they had taken the only conclusion was that the imposition of a test resulted in loose subscription. Donaldson put forward a compromise which would in part meet the claims of those who believed that

1. Report on the Subscription of Tests, 1892, Vol. 1, p.vii.
2. Ibid: p.12.
3. Ibid: p.10.

the Universities ought to have some connection with studies which came under theology while leaving to the individual churches the special doctrinal teaching which alone would satisfy each of them for its own students, the Theological Colleges being affiliated to the Universities. A further consequence of the test was that it limited Chairs, which remained subject to it, to professed members of the Established Church, precluding many eminently qualified men from applying. To Donaldson this amounted to an improper subjection of the teaching and discipline of part of the Universities to external authority: Theological Faculties could never be considered as proper parts of national Universities while they were restricted in this way.[1]

While the Scottish Leader, a mouthpiece of Liberalism, was stating that "All consistent Liberals agree that theological tests for University Professors of non-theological subjects are obsolete[2]" Donaldson was no just paying lip service to party policy for he was going further and urging their abolition without any exceptions whatsoever. Rather his approach to the question from a realistic standpoint reflected the free thinking approach to theological questions which had been central to his early nonconformist background.

While Donaldson was presenting his ideas to the committee on tests cracks were appearing in the harmony between the University and the Dundee College over the terms of the Agreement amicably concluded in 1890.

1. Ibid: p.11.
2. Scottish Leader, 15 August 1892.

"In regard to the Act," Donaldson was to state later, "I held two points firmly, that the only method of settling the question satisfactorily was by an incorporating union, for that was the only method fully in harmony with the constitution of the Scottish universities, and that right method of arranging this was by ordinance. I therefore proposed to the authorities of the Dundee College that they should proceed on the idea that it was to be incorporation and I submitted these terms to the Senate. But the result was that neither party would adopt such an idea as the basis, and an agreement was framed which was a strange combination of the ideas of affiliation and incorporation. All the parties concerned in the construction of the agreement were satisfied with it. But I felt confident that in the course of time defects would appear." 1.

Now Donaldson was to be proved right and all his forebodings realised. He had wanted the Dundee College to have a place in the University which would be the same as that of the United College and St Mary's and he believed that the Union as effected gave the Dundee College too much independence.[2] The Dundee College had in effect been given a privileged position which of itself aroused resentment in St Andrews but even greater concern was occasioned by the implication of these arrangements. For it was confidently anticipated that several new chairs would be established in the near future and since all Professors were members of the Senate it was foreseen that the Dundee Professors would eventually be in the majority and thereby control the teaching

1. James Donaldson, University Addresses, (Edin, 1911), p.314, Address 5 October 1897. That this expressed his views at an earlier date and that they had not been modified with the advantage of hindsight, is confirmed by a diary entry during the early days of negotiations for union: "Dined with Professor and Mrs. Purdie and Mr. Cunningham of Dundee. Discussion about union of Dundee and St Andrews. Cunningham claimed to be source of Victoria University idea of affiliation. Need to convince him that as far as professorships are concerned, Incorporation is best." St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Diary 25 January 1888.

2. The two Professors representing Dundee on the Court had a voice in the management of the funds of the St Andrews Colleges but no St Andrews Professor had any say in the management of the Dundee College funds. Similarly, the Dundee representatives had a voice in appointing professors of the United college and in other non-financial matters whereas the St Andrews Colleges sent no representatives to the governing body of the Dundee College and had no voice in the appointment of the latter's professors.

of the University. Following from this, since the Act provided for the Senate to appoint three of its number as assessors to the Court, these with the Principal of the Dundee College (also a member under the Act) and the two representatives from the Dundee Council could give the Dundee Council six members whereas the only provision the Act made for the St Andrews Colleges to be represented was that the two Principals were members. There was therefore, as a matter of fact, an imbalance: Dundee had been provided with the means of securing a predominating power in both the Senate and the Court, in appointing the University's Professors and the use of its funds, while St. Andrews enjoyed no such reciprocal powers. Clearly the terms of the Agreement were inequitable and inadequate and work began on drafting a Supplementary Agreement - known as Schedule "B" - with the intention of achieving a more harmonious union.

But in trying to resolve the problems which were becoming increasingly evident the true magnitude of the dificulties which had been created and the opportunities these offered for strife became apparent. The redoubtable Duke of Argyll, Chancellor since 1850 and of unshakable confidence that no one had been endowed with a judgment

Footnote refers p.390A

1A. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 5774, letter from the Duke of Argyll, 25 October 1893.
Although nominally a whig - he had held various offices under Aberdeen, Palmerston and Gladstone - he was never a party man in the narrow sense. He was one of the most experienced and distinguished politicians in Gladstone's Government in 1880 but the following year he resigned as Lord Privy Seal over the Irish Land Bill, ending his ministerial career. From then on he became the self appointed spokesman of the landed classes producing a torrent of books and articles in defence of private property in land. He was also a noted scientific and theological thinker whose views ran directly counter to the progressive thought of the day. Indeed "This unusual combination of high social status and intellectual eminence tended to isolate him and give to his writings their characteristically uncompromising quality". Victorian Studies, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Lond., 1977), p.151. The Duke of Argyll and the Land Question in late Nineteenth Century Britain.
There is nothing to suggest that politics had any bearing on the Duke's participation in University affairs.

that even approached his own, was convinced that the situation showed "how very ill the Bill was considered and what a trap this legislation may be to all."[1A]

The question was now raised - what actually was the nature of the union which had been created? The difficulties arose from the changes introduced in the drafting after June 1888. The Commission had been charged by the Act to "affiliate the said University College and to make it form part of the said University"; "affiliate" had a recognized meaning but what, it was asked, did the additional words "and to make it form part of" mean.[1] To Donaldson the nature of the union was perfectly clear and afforded no ambiguity - the fact that the funds and estates of the Dundee College remained under the management and control of the College Council, that the latter appointed its own professors and was empowered to elect two representatives to the University Court, all unequivocally indicated that this was an affiliation for "in all these respects, the College is outside the University Court, the University has no control over it whatsoever, and the College is not in any sense a part of the University."[2] He neatly summed up the position of the Dundee professors being members of the Senate as "an arrangement (that) does not produce an incorporation of interests, but merely a participation of privileges."[3] This problem of whether

1A. See foot of p.390.

1. An affiliated College remains under the control of its own governing body, which manages its funds and appoints and controls its staff: the University would have control of the University education offered by such a college, nothing else. This is distinct from incorporation: here the College would be managed by the University Court, the University would appoint all the staff, the Professors would all be members of the Senate. The College would cease to exist as a separate body and since it would have no governing body of its own there could be no representatives elected from it.
2. James Donaldson, University Addresses, (Edin., 1911), p.192, Address 14 April 1892.
3. Ibid: p.193.

it was an affiliation or an incorporation which was to cause such bitter wrangling was to some extent caused by semantics: "there is no mention of incorporation in any part of the Bill. It is always affiliation. But those who had charge of the Bill continually used the word "incorporation" and acted under the influence of the idea."[1]

This however was not the only problem. When a party is dissatisfied with an agreement once executed, a natural avenue to explore is whether or not the agreement is really valid. Again the wording of the Act gave cause for doubt. Section 15, dealing with affiliation of Colleges to Universities in general, specifically provided for this to be effected by Ordinance. However, Section 16, the provisions of which related only to St Andrews, merely empowered the Commissioners "to affiliate" the bodies and so they had - albeit after some uncertainty - done so by an Order. The important distinction is that while a Royal Commission can itself make an Order, an Ordinance can only be made by the authority of the Queen in Council.

As if these difficulties were not enough, they were compounded and the situation further exacerbated by there being no provision for resolving differences which might arise between the University and the Dundee College.[2] The Senate had resolved that the union "shall, as regards duration, be permanent": had it been effected by Ordinance and the union proved unsatisfactory, it would only have required a subsequent Ordinance to dissolve it.

1. James Donaldson, University Addresses, (Edin., 1911), p.184.
2. Such a provision would have been redundant in a true incorporation since the separate identities of the bodies being incorporated would have ceased to exist, being merged in the body thus created.

Donaldson certainly believed that the Dundee College had been granted too great a degree of independence and a disproportionate influence in the affairs of the University yet it must be acknowldged that he had a central rôle in drafting the Agreement. The explanation to this apparent paradox is that since the new Court could not be constituted until an Agreement was reached, he believed the terms agreed to were the best which could be made in all the circumstances and that with goodwill and diplomacy on both sides difficulties could be resolved as they arose and a mutually advantageous modus vivendi achieved. That this had not happened was not his only cause for disillusionment; by now he was equally concerned about the whole way in which the Commission itself operated for he believed that the way it conducted business militated against matters being dealt with either expeditiously or properly. By late 1891 he was assuring Rosebery that:

> "The Universities Commission as you predicted has turned out a mess. The evidence on tests has been printed long ago, but the Commission cannot make up its mind what to recommend. The Chairman especially is hopelessly unable to decide, always halting between two opinions and only external force will bring him to put an end to his vacillation. Half of the Commissions sits in Edinburgh, and half of them in London: and what the northern meeting agrees to is unknown to the southern till the evidence is printed and then the southern cannot agree to the opinion of the northern. The Chairman who attends both sets is not strong enough to reconcile them."

Thus, in considering the union with Dundee, there were difficulties which had their genesis in the drafting of the Act, in the terms of Agreement on which the union was founded and the dichotomous nature of the Commission itself. Throughout 1892 negotiations continued on the provisions of Schedule "B", to amend the original Agreement and

the parties anticipated that agreement would be reached before the end of the year. Such was the situation when in November there was a Rectorial election. The new Rector was the Marquess of Bute.

Bute was a gifted and remarkable man. Born in 1847, he had succeeded his father as Third Marquess when only six months old. Aristocratic, indeed of Royal descent,[1] he combined immense wealth[2] with great erudition and in particular was a noted medieval scholar. In 1868, within months of attaining his majority, he was received into the Roman Church;[3] his enthusiasm for his new religion and his marriage in 1872 to Gwendoline Fitzalan-Howard, connecting him with one of the foremost Roman families in Britain[4], soon won him a leading position in the British Catholic community. Bute is openly described as "a religious zealot, talking endlessly of altars and liturgies, a student of clairvoyance with a wealth of esoteric knowledge; he was a remarkable product of the romantic Catholic revival"[5]

1. He was a direct descendant in the male line from Sir John Stuart, natural son of Robert II (d. 1390). The family was, however not ennobled until a Scottish peerage in 1703.
2. Throughout the eighteenth century the head of the family in each generation had married an heiress, especially the 1st Marquess who in 1766 married the sole heiress of the 2nd last Viscount Windsor, bringing the Windsor and Pembroke estates in Wales and Glamorgan into the family.
3. It was around this event that Disraeli wrote his best selling novel Lothair and a significant part of Bute's fame in Society arose from being the hero.
4. Gwendoline Fitzalan-Howard was the dau of the 1st Baron Howard of Glossop, a leading Roman Catholic and former Liberal MP, the second son of 9th Duke of Norfolk.
5. John Davies, Cardiff and the Marquesses of Bute, (Cardiff, 1981) p.13. The author also states that Bute " was undoubtedly an atractive personality" (Ibid. p.24) without any convincing evidence.

Bute's only action expressive of interest in party politics was that he contributed substantial sums to the Conservative Party funds. He had no interest whatsoever in political campaigning and it was not until 1894 - twenty six years after he came of age - that he addressed the House of Lord, and then exclusively on the affairs of St Andrews. Nor did the Court and Society have any greater attraction for him than political activity.[1] In 1888 he had bought the Scottish Review to advocate Home Rule but this reflected his view of the Scottish Parliament as a symbol of the "national, Catholic and feudal" period of Scotland's past which so fascinated him rather than the expression of an interest in national politics.[2] During the years that Bute was associated with the University - he was re-elected for a second term as Rector in 1895 - he and Donaldson maintained prolific correspondence but nothing in Bute's letters reveals any political partisanship or suggests that political considerations had the least bearing on his attitude towards events at St Andrews.[3] Bute, like Argyll, belonged to a category of men that has virtually disappeared; wealthy and socially secure, they had neither need for nor saw any value in popular favour since they could live very comfortably without it; if their views differed from everyone else that was only because they were right and others wrong.

1. His aversion to the Court had its origin in a written direction from his deceased parents (his mother died in 1859) to avoid the Court on account of the Queen's treatment of his aunt, Lady Flora Hastings,

2. Donaldson did not credit Bute with any political motivation behind his obstructive policy. "He (Bute) imagines that both Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury will take his side in any scheme he may start, simply because they use polite words to him."

   NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 1014/164, letter to Lord Rosebery 12 December 1893.

3. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 30166, letter from Lord Bute, 21 October 1893.

Donaldson had the highest regard for Bute's scholarship, yet there were occasions in the early days when the latter's preoccupation with minutiae and topics irrelevant to the age and the current affairs of the University, must have caused Donaldson to smile. Something of his personality is apparent from his writing: apart from The Primitive Language of Aboriginals of Tenneriffe, he had published works on Celtic Latin Hymns, Malachi of Armagh and The New Light on St Patrick[1] Before he had even been installed Principal Cunningham of St Mary's died Bute was obsessed with what he should wear and lengthy correspondence over succeeding months concerned with the design of a gown which he designed himself with a cowl-like hood.[2]

Such originality may appear marginally amusing and either overlooked or tolerantly indulged when exhibited by a man who was also intelligent, learned and very generous. Bute's idiosyncrasies however, became less diverting when it was apparent that he had no less original ideas about the interpretation of his rôle as Rector. Although the this had become largely ceremonial[3] his authority had not been altered in law. Bute, with his passionate interest in the Middle Ages, was thrilled to be Rector of such an ancient University and he viewed his election as an unsurpassed opportunity to restore the traditional authority of the Rector to what it had been in earlier times: it was his intention

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 30166, letter from Lord Bute, 30 October 1893.
2. Donaldson, catching sight of him walking through the Quad of the United College in this gown thought Bute "looked vy queer". NLS: Rosebery Papers, 10014/166, letter to Lord Rosebery, 12 December 1893.
3. This had become particularly marked after the election of J.S. Mill as Rector in 1865.

to direct the affairs of the University and restore it to his own - medieval - ideas.[1]

Bute was sincerely interested in the University and - within his own definition - in the rôle of Rector and well intentioned. His personality and interpretation of the Rectorship would have been likely to cause problems at any time; it was singularly unfortunate that his election coincided with a time when the University was confronted with unique and immense difficulties. Bute believed that his position gave him the authority to develop the University along the lines he determined and in his conception of a medieval University it was inconceivable that there should be any thought of associating with a parvenu college. He quickly made known his detestation of the idea and his resolute opposition to any form of union with Dundee. Concession and compromise were strangers to him and under his influence attitudes rapidly polarised. From the first meeting of the Court which he chaired as Lord Rector, in January 1893, Bute sought single mindedly not only to thwart any steps towards a closer union but to destroy such union as existed. Soon it was apparent that there was a "Bute Party", for the Rector commanded the support of the Provost of St Andrews and the Rector's and Chancellor's Assessors which gave them consistently a majority of one opposed to the Union.[2] Bute was set on severing the connection with the Dundee College by having the Agreement reduced and was to institute a prolonged Court action to achieve this.

1. R.G. Cant, St Andrews University, (Edin. & Lond., 1970), p.152.
2. "He (Bute) has got possession of the votes of those members of the University Court who are reactionary and retrograde and the result is that they are continually planning schemes in opposition to the wishes of the Senate and to all intelligent people." Haddo House Papers, NRA (Scot), Box 1/6, letter to Lady Aberdeen, 5 March, 1895.

Donaldson's encounters with Bute through 1893 were such that by October he was describing him as "an extraordinary man."[1] The Rector would descend on St Andrews for a few days at a time, staying at Rusacks Marine Hotel, and Donaldson was convinced that during these visits his mind had been "poisoned" by a clique of churchmen and Tories. Donaldson charitably believed that Bute had been unable to see through them "And no one cares to tell Lord Bute with what low friends he is associating."[2] The Commission was no less irritated by the course events were taking at St Andrews and Bute's contribution to the Conservative's coffers did nothing to endear the Marquess to them. "Lord Bute" the Secretary to the Commission, advocate Robert Fitzroy Bell, wrote tartly "ought to have attended the meetings of the Commision before he ventured to form an opinion of a matter of which he evidently understands little."[3] Donaldson's confidence in the ultimate outcome was greatly bolstered by the knowledge that the Commission was wholly in favour of the Union. "(W)e must not allow our patience to be exhausted" . . ." the Chairman Lord Kinnear pontificated from a comfortable distance, "I need hardly say our natural sympathies are all with St Andrews."[4]

The Supplementary Agreement (Schedule "B") designed to bring about a closer and less problem strewn union had been signed on 9 December 1893. Anxious to have learnt something from the experience following the original Agreement in 1890, it was proposed that the Supplementary

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/158, letter to Lord Rosebery, 23 October, 1893.
2. Ibid: Ms 10014/160.
3. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 5959, letter from Fitzroy Bell, 25 January, 1893.
4. Ibid: Ms 6676, letter from Lord Kinnear, 22 January 1893.

Agreement should be embodied in an Act of Parliament. However, further action with regard to this was stopped when it was overtaken by other events. The Bute Party raised an action to determine whether the Union was valid, which turned on the question whether the Commissioners were right in establishing the Union by an Order and not an Ordinance.[1] The Dundee Council became the defendant in the action, holding that the Union was not only valid but could not be dissolved by an Ordinance. This action went as far as the House of Lords which declared in April 1895 that two Ordinances of the Commission were not in conformity with the Act of 1889.[2] The Lords held that the Commissioners had done what Parliament intended but in a wrong way and that the Privy Council would have to re-enact the Union in the proper form, by an Ordinance. In effect, the Lords reduced the Order establishing the Union but left standing the Agreement forming its basis; it was not therefore necessary for the parties to make a new Agreement. The Lords thereby reinforced what was implied by the Act - that it was intended the two bodies should be united.

Other actions by the Bute Party were dismissed and the University and the College legally joined together in January 1897. A union was eventually established which conformed closely to that advocated by Donaldson years earlier: the Dundee College was truly incorporated in the University, a concession being that, although the University appointed all the Professors of the College, the latter was authorised to appoint its own Principal.

1. The action was not brought by members of the Court but those bringing the action were all members of the Court.
2. These were the Ordinances purporting to affiliate the Dundee College and make it part of the University (21 March 1890) and to constitute the new University Court (10 April 1890).

Throughout this wearily prolonged controversy, Donaldson's position was exceedingly difficult. He was wholly in favour of union but once it was apparent that the Agreement rested on no legal validity, he realised that if one party was intent on reducing it, they were certain to succeed. To steer the University through this storm, to sustain such goodwill as there was and to temper the extreme views was a difficult policy to follow for it was easy to be thought weak and vacilating while at the same time he knew how damaging to the reputation of the University protracted legal wrangling would be. What made it all the harder to bear with patience was that arguments were often over what he considered trivia.[1] During this time Donaldson always appeared imperturbable. While shrewd and well informed on what was happening, he preserved his tranquil manner. When he met anyone he would ask mildly, "Well, is there anything new?"[2] and after it was over he viewed the years of stress in a wholly positive way, "sometimes," he mused, "hardships are blessings in disguise."[3]

His moderating and philosophical approach was combined with a remarkable tact and patience and time showed that his policy was the wisest and most successful: although the Bute Party technically won their case on appeal to the Lords in 1895, it was a phyrric victory for the Commission ultimately incorporated the College in the University by an Ordinance. That Donaldson succeeded in eventually bringing about a union was very largely a personal achievement. Professor Southgate

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/163, letter to Lord Rosebery, 12 December 1893.
2. Aberdeen University Review, Vol. I, 1915, p.200.
3. James Donaldson, University Addresses, (Edin., 1911), p.290, 291. 6 October 1896.

has described this period as "for ever associated with the name of Lord Bute, tho the initial damage was done by Donaldson."[1] Undoubtedly Bute was the personality which dominated these years but to assert that Donaldson was responsible for the troubles cannot be sustained by the facts. It was not Donaldson's fault that the drafting of the Act was unclear nor that there were circumstances demanding haste in preparing the first Agreement. There is ample evidence that Donaldson was alive to the defects in the Act and to the difficulties which were likely to arise from such a union as was originally effected and - with agreement being reached in 1890 and three years later in the Supplementary Agreement - there are reasonable grounds to believe differences which arose would have been amicably resolved. The factor which no one could have anticipated was the advent of Bute, whose personality and machinations were wholly outside normal experience. That Donaldson's life, which had not been short in experience of dealing with all sorts of men, had never afforded him an encounter with a personality to equal Bute's cannot be considered a valid reflection on either his experience or foresight.

These years were certainly not what he had anticipated when he had come to to St Andrews in 1886. Then he had been so optimistic as to believe that the "work of the Principal of St Andrews must be easier than that of any other Principal . . ."[2] and although he professed never to have been worried about events at St Andrews he must often have felt the seemingly interminable difficulties wearing, and he often

1. Prof. D.G. Southgate, University Education in Dundee, (Edin., 1982), p.98.
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/81, Letter to Lord Rosebery, 28 February 1886.

remembered those halcyon days at Haddo with the Aberdeens. "We think continually of you" he wrote wistfully to Ishbel in Canada in December 1895, ". . . and I often muse on the olden times and have sweet memories of Haddo and all its ways. And the thought comes into one's mind, when will you come back and shall I be living to welcome you and see you once more.[1]

The nature of the dispute had changed over the years; whereas formerly the disagreements had been between the College and the University, the removal of difficulties between these bodies did not mean the end of difficulties for Donaldson. For within the Court the Bute Party refused to acknowledge defeat and the Court became "the scene of strife and of strange and irregular proceedings."[2]

Early in 1897 a minority of the Court, including Donaldson, seceded protesting that the majority had behaved illegally in refusing to proceed with an Ordinance. The remaining member of the Court thereupon proceded to fill the Chair of English Literature with an obscure minister from Aberdeenshire, despite an agreement between the University and the College that there would be no duplication of chairs and that Professor McCormick[3] of Dundee would be appointed. The press condemned this as "a grave academic scandal".[4] So grave was the situation - widely

1. Haddo House Papers: NRA (Scot) Box 1/6, letter to Lady Aberdeen, 5 December 1895.
2. The Scotsman, 6 June 1897.
3. (Sir) William Symington McCormack (1857-1930) was Professor of English at University College, Dundee from 1891 until 1900. He relinquished the Chair when appointed Secretary to the Carnegie Trust (1901-19) and was later Chairman of the University Grants Committee (1919-1930).
4. Advertiser, 17 June 1897. Even the Westminster Gazetter condemned the appointment in very definite terms as did the Scotsman, the Glasgow Herald and the Speaker.

publicised - that Sir John Leng, the Member for Dundee, called attention in the House on 18 June to the danger which might be occasioned by the Commission being dissolved before the relations between Dundee and St Andrews were resolved. He blamed what he called the "medieval Party" for causing the trouble but also expressed his conviction that if the Commission had shown more firmness litigation might have been averted.[1]

That nothing was done, despite the outcry in the press and the attendant demand for an inquiry, to some extent reflects the lack of interest in London in Scottish affairs and the great reluctance of the Government to interfere in what to many seemed an impossible state of affairs. The situation in St Andrews was further exacerbated when Bute received the Freedom of St Andrews late in 1896, largely on account of his generosity in restoring some of the ancient buildings in the Burgh and on the distinct understanding that it had nothing to do with University matters. Bute however, on receiving the honour, clearly indicated his belief that it had been given as a token of the Town Council's approval of his actions in regard to the University. The new burgess was strongly criticised by the indignant Council the following April for his remarks, the Citizen commenting that Bute would understand from the report of the meeting "that the casket he received from the City of St Andrews is somewhat tarnished in his keeping."[2] As a result, when Donaldson opened the session in October 1897, feelings were running at an all time high.

1. Hansard, Vol. 50, p.375, 376, 18 June 1897. The Commission had shown no inclincation to become involved exhibiting a definite preference for the rôle of spectator.
2. St Andrews Citizen, 17 April 1897.

As was his established custom, Donaldsom opened the new session with an address reviewing events affecting the University over the preceding year. The University was confronted with a serious financial crisis since money granted by the Government had been allocated by the Commission on the express understanding that the Dundee College would form part of the University and the Commissioners now maintained that in face of the impending legal action - the Bute Party were appealing to the Lords to declare the Ordinance approved by the Queen invalid - the whole question of the sum to be assigned to the University would have to be revised. In reviewing the events that had brought the University to the present crisis Donaldson pointed out that the Lord Rector, the Provost of St Andrews and their followers, in their implacable opposition to any form of union were opposing the Government, the Privy Council and the Commissioners. This year, however, in presenting a resumé of the background to the dispute he did not confine himself to a discussion of policies and issues but allowed himself remarks about personalities involved - Bute and Provost Paterson - of a nature which could only further inflame the situation.[1] The frustration he felt can be imagined; instead of the stability and progress he had so confidently anticipated a decade earlier he had been confronted with a dispute which had dragged on relentlessly; consideration of policies had become subservient to that of personalities and minds dominated by prejudice and emotion repeatedly demonstrated their inaccessibility to rational consideration of what was manifestly best for both the University and the College.

1. James Donaldson, University Addresses, (Edin., 1911) p.320. Address, 5 October 1897.

It must have been to Donaldson's considerable surprise that the following day he found himself the object of a consistently hostile press. The newspapers and their public were by now war weary with the whole St Andrews business; it had gone on for too long, few people could profess to understand what it was all about and many of those who had once sympathised with the University's difficulties had been alienated by what they saw as the interminable and unedifying bickering of educated men. Donaldson had been the subject of severe criticism in the press before, on both his appointment to Aberdeen and to St Andrews but that had been an expression of party politics, a Tory press attacking a Liberal appointment. There had been no criticism then from The Scotsman but now it was to the fore in denouncing Donaldson's speech, for no one could suggest that party politics were of any relevance or had any part in the matter. Donaldson tried to defend himself against the allegation of derogatory statements about Bute and Provost Paterson in a letter to The Scotsman and The Glasgow Herald, arguing that he had refrained "as far as possible" from expressing his own opinions.[1] In normal times his explanations might have been accorded a sympathetic hearing and granted the benefit of any doubt, but as he well knew, these were not normal times and it was in the context of these abnormal times that he was judged.

At the next meeting of the Court on 13 October, Bute was "very kind and yielded everything"[2] until at the end of the meeting he got one of his followers to propose "that a committee be appointed to

1. The Scotsman 9 October 1897.
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/196, letter to Lord Rosebery, 15 November 1897.

consider and report upon the address delivered by Principal Donaldson at the opening of the session and published by him in the newspapers."[1] Eventually the committee was entrusted with considering "the past and present action" of Donaldson in University matters, with Sir Ralph Anstruther, Bt, the Rector's Assessor as Convenor. "He (Bute) could not have done a more foolish thing", Donaldson informed Rosebery "for I have received innumerable letters of sympathy and an assurance that the public is with me. Of course all these things are distracting, but we both take them with the utmost coolness and they do not disturb our temper in the slightest, we are as happy as the day is long."[2]

Whatever the attitude he affected in public, it is unlikely that his indifference was as total and unqualified as he pretended. He was effectively being impeached by the University Court, an event both so novel and suggestive of some serious misdeameanour as to command widespread speculation and gossip in University circles and beyond; to assert that he and Mary - to whom what people thought was not totally unimportant - were as happy as the day is as startling as it is improbable. Certainly, he was confident that his address was "believed to have done a great deal of good"[3] and Provost Paterson was defeated when he stood for re-election to the Council, which Donaldson chose to regard as a victory but he must have been aware that it was a victory of a severely limited nature for the electoral defeat of St Andrews' Provost could scarcely be expected to make news beyond East Fife. Neither was it likely to influence the deliberations of the Committee even then considering his conduct nor the judgment of the many others

1. Donaldson always sent address in advance to the Press.
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/196, letter to Lord Rosebery, 15 November 1897. It is remarkable that none of these letters is preserved in the Donaldson Papers.
3. Ibid.

who needed no encouragement to involve themselves. Nor were Donaldson's enemies confined to the Court as is clear from a pamphlet extending to sixteen pages which was soon published and circulating in St Andrews. The St Andrews Dispute by a Graduate[1], a virulent attack on Donaldson held him reponsible for the terms of the original Agreement of 1890 and whose actions the reader was assured all subsequent strife directly emanated.

We are left with the question of whether or not he was really innocent of the reasonable - indeed in the climate, the only - construction that would be placed on his Address. If he is accorded the benefit of doubt, we must place to his account an extraordinary lack of judgment. Donaldson had for a long time shown himself too astute and experienced of the ways of the world not to foresee the response and indeed parts of the speech, particularly those relating to Bute and Provost Paterson, were so monstrous in a public address, that even someone short on tact would have drawn back. Further, he had not actually delivered the whole speech as sent to the press and the nature of those parts casts doubts on his claim that they were omitted because he was running short of time; the time it would have taken to deliver it in toto cannot have made any significant difference. That he had no intention of delivering part of the speech cannot be discounted, in including it in the copy sent to the press he would ensure its widespread circulation and avoid any chance of demonstration of dissent in the hall. This is to credit him with a slightly Machiavellian turn of mind but the circumstances support the premise for he had sufficient experience - this was his twelfth opening address - to judge the time for delivery.

1. Hay Fleming Library LF 1116. This pamphlet, considered worthy of being bound in a hard cover, is undated and bears no publisher's name.

He made the address in his capacity as Principal - which assured him an audience and press attention - and to use such a platform to present one side of a quarrel and to denigate the supporters of the other was to abuse the privilege of his office. The whole episode was discreditable to him personally and by association to the University.

The Committee appointed by the Court was apparently in no haste to present its Report which may reflect a certain lack of enthusiasm among its members for the task. The Committee - either fearing that it would be opening a Pandora's Box if it were to concern itself with the past as well as the present actions of the Principal or just glad to confine itself to an inquiry within the narrowest limits which would satisfy the Court - early resolved to confine itself to a consideration of the Address. It was not until March the following year 1898, that Anstruther wrote from his home, Balkaskie near Anstruther, to tell Donaldson that as the committee's "conclusion . . . is unfavourable to the tone of the address"[1] the Committee was willing to consider any representation which Donaldson wished to make.

The Committee, while conceding that the Address was essentially a description of what it chose to term "the Dundee Controversy", also was of opinion "that the use of such a method of controversy and of such language on <u>such an occasion</u> tends to the subversion of discipline, and is to be deprecated as dereogatory to the reputation and dignity of the University." Donaldson was prepared to accept the Report as advice tendered to him by the Court but he held that he was free to say what he liked when delivering an address and would never deliver

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 5757, letter from Sir Ralph Anstruther, Bt, 5 March 1898.

such on any other condition.[1] But he pointed out that the Court was wrong if it imagined that the 1889 Act empower it to dictate to him what he might or might not say in public.[2] He offered to withdraw any statments which could be proved inaccurate or ungenerous but he also had a word of caution. "I trust that the Committee will take care not to go beyond its power" he wrote Anstruther, and after expressing the belief that the Address was dead and forgotten - he must have been well aware that to some people it was very much alive - he suggested that "it would be a pity to bring it to life again," adding confidently, "though of course that could do no harm to me personally but quite the opposite."[3] Anstruther may have been disconcerted by Donaldson's reply, especially when Donaldson informed him that he had received many letters not only from the other Scottish Universities but also from prominent men at Oxford and statesmen of both parties supporting his right to speak his mind. The Report submitted to the Court was dated 21 February, predating Anstruther's letter to Donaldson, which suggests that the Committee chose to make no alteration to their Report on receipt of Donaldson's reply.

The Court received the report on 17 March and resolved that it be kept in retentis, a decision rescinded a fortnight later when it resolved that the report be printed in the minutes of the meeting. Such a sudden volte face was probably forced by circumstances on the Court; it is likely that the content of the report was already known

1. Ibid: Ms 5758, letter to Sir Ralph Anstruther, 9 March 1898. This is an amended draft from which Donaldson evidently transcribed his reply to Anstruther.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

outside the Court and to hold it in retentis was only to invite rumour, speculation and fabrication.

Bute and his supporters must have been well satisfied for although the Committee had limited itself to considering only the Address, the Report was a definite reproof to the Principal. Donaldson, however, does not appear to have been in any way chastened by the Report, nor with the passage of time to have reassessed his action. Indeed, he may be said to have had the last word, for when in 1911, after being Principal for twenty five years, he published his annual Addresses, he included his Address of 1897 without any alterations and in addition published his letters to the press of 8 and 21 October that year. Anyone sufficiently disloyal to want to read what the papers published in opposition would be obliged to seek them out. "The history of what is called the Dundee quarrel is really a bit of comical human nature," he wrote blithely in 1913. "The quarrel never gave me any mental trouble."[1]

The Citizen had of late been more charitably disposed towards Donaldson and a reader may well have wondered whether it was not writing tongue in cheek when, a week after the Council meeting on 31 March, it noted that:

> "The troubles of St Andrews have no effect upon the placid mind of the Marquess of Bute, for during Passion week will be published a "Service for Palm Sunday" that he has recently compiled. Also is announced a second edition of his "Roman Breviary", a production of incomparable excellence, out of print for a while, that first saw the light in 1879. The Palace of the Kings at Falkland never had a more accomplished owner than the Marquess of Bute.2.

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/215, letter to Lord Rosebery, 2 July 1913.
2. The Citizen, 7 April 1898.

But Donaldson was not in St Andrews to read this. He and Mary went abroad almost every year at the end of the session for a month or six weeks but they never left before the middle of April; that this year they had left a fortnight earlier may well indicate that the past months had not been such a carefree time as he professed and that they were both glad to put St Andrews behind them for a few weeks. They must have bolted from Scores Park almost within hours of the Court meeting for on 3 April they left London and crossed to Calais, arriving two days later in Rome where they stayed until leaving for Pisa on 14 May. From there they moved on to Milan and were settled at the Hotel Beau Rivage at Luzerne when on 19 May Gladstone died and it was there on 25 May that Donaldson received a telegram inviting him to the funeral. Hurriedly packing they left that day, spending the night at the Schweitzerhof in Basle and the next at the Hotel Chemin de Fer du Nord in Paris, arriving in London on 27 May, for the funeral in Westminster Abbey the following day.

Donaldson left no record of his thoughts on the death of Gladstone whose life had spanned almost the whole of the nineteenth century, Born in the reign of George III, in 1809, just before the Regency was established, he could remember hearing in London the guns celebrating Waterloo, had listened to Canning's great speeches and to the Reform debate in 1831. Gladstone had become a legend in his own time, the Collossus of the Liberal Party, but to Donaldson he had obstructed Rosebery's political advancement and his determination to retain the leadership of the Party, to perform what was almost a spiritual mission, to give Ireland Home Rule, appeared to him selfish vanity. One senses that Donaldson regretted that Gladstone had lived so long for by the

time he died Rosebery's brief and inglorious Premiership was over and his political star already in an eclipse from which it would never re-emerge.

Later that year, in November 1898, Bute's second term as Rector ended and as if all the events of the past had not been more than sufficient for Donaldson to contend with, the final scenes of his six years as Rector were no less strange. When the Court met on 22 September one of the matters before it was to fill the Chair of Materia Medica. Although there were a number of admirably qualified candidates, Bute was determined to appoint Dr W.H. de Wyett, a lecturer in the University living in Queens Gardens, notwithstanding that general repute did not hold de Wyett in high regard. Since one of Bute's supporters was absent from the meeting, there were seven votes for de Wyett and seven for Dr C.R. Marshall of Downing College, Cambridge.[1] Bute, as Chairman, had the right to exercise a casting vote but, such was his anger, he turned purple and pale alternately and was unable to speak.[2] Court meetings often lasted all day, the members adjourning to St Mary's Hall for lunch which was brought round in a trap from Rusack's Marine Hotel. Such convivial lunches together might be expected to reduce tensions, smooth asperities and generally facilitate the harmonious resolution of difficulties, but whatever probability there may have been of this was most effectively vitiated by Bute's insistence that he always lunch alone at a separate table. Now Bute requested that the matter be deferred until after lunch, to which the members gladly concurred.

1. Minutes of University Court, 22 September 1898, Minute XI.
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/200, letter to Lord Rosebery, 3 January 1899.

Bute took advantage of this recess to send a telegram to the defaulting supporter but when the Court reconvened and the letter had not appeared it was agreed to defer the election until the next meeting. By the time the Court met again on 19 October Bute had appealed to all his supporters to appear which placed even the most ardent in a dilemma since de Wyett was so inferior to several of the other candidates, in addition to which they all knew of his doubtful character. Yet such was the strange influence which Bute always succeeded in exercising over his followers that they all duly presented themselves at the meeting.[1] Donaldson, seriously alarmed at Bute's intransigence in insisting that de Wyett be appointed, urged delay until some investigation had been made into de Wyett's past. "We will elect him first," Bute retorted, "and then you can inquire into culpa."[2] So de Wyett was elected Professor of Materia Medica by eight votes to seven[3], the dissenting voters protesting and disclaiming all responsibility.

Immediately afterwards, Principal Mackay of Dundee initiated an investigation of de Wyett as a result of which, in December, Donaldson was petitioned to convene a special meeting of the Court. When this was accordingly summoned on 17 December, Principal Mackay confronted the members with a statement prepared by a Glasgow solicitor with the startling revelation that de Wyett was a criminal who had lived under

1. The University Commissions were very conscious of this fact. with a note of regret, Fitzroy Bell had written to Donaldson in 1896 that "Lord Bute's supporters seem to be always present in full strength." St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6004, letter from Fitzroy Bell, 13 August 1896.
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014, letter to Lord Rosebery, 3 January 1899.
3. Minutes of University Court, 19 October 1898, Minute III.

numerous aliases in Glasgow and was suspected of murder. Nor was this all, for not content with transgressing the criminal law de Wyett had demonstrated an outrageous contempt for the moral code of the period, living in St Andrews with a woman whom he represented as his housekeeper and by whom he had had two daughters. One of these children had died in St Andrews where her father had her buried under a false name as an orphan. Despite these horrific discoveries, the farce of the truly extraordinary Court under Bute's Chairmanship continued when Dr Anderson protested that since de Wyett had been duly elected and appointed to the Chair "and no charges against his life and character having been formulated before the electing Court . . . it is incompetent for the Court to entertain any statement or charges" against de Wyett. After the wrangling which long ago had become ubiquitous to Court Meetings it was resolved to hear the statement and take legal advice. As a result Donaldson confronted de Wyett with the allegations, whereupon the latter hastily departed from St Andrews and on 29 December the Court met to receive his resignation and to appoint Dr Marshall after all. Bute's response was appropriately mediaeval - de Wyett' surviving daughter apparently remained in St Andrews and Bute proposed that the child be sent to a nunnery. The fate of this unfortunate child is not recorded.

Bute's Rectorship was at last over. "We shall have hard work to get rid of some of the difficulties which Bute has created for us" Donaldson sighed, "but I have no doubt that henceforth we shall be free from any serious trouble."[1] He had always expxressed himself confident that ultimately reason and good will would prevail against prejudice and regional pride but in the years before victory was won

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/200, letter to Lord Rosebery, 3 January 1889.

he had often felt pain and disappointment. This time, however, his optimism was proved justified. Bute's place as Rector was filled by Professor James Stuart[1] - his Rectorial Address was appropriately entitled "Dawn of Better Days" - who had no inclination towards other than the ceremonial and symbolic aspects of the Rectorship. Donaldson's relief at Bute's departure must have been beyond measure; for years his efforts to carry the University on the flood tide of reform and development which had enabled the other Scottish Universities to make real progress had been thwarted consistently by Bute and his supporters. Only now had St Andrews moved into a period when internal peace could facilitate progress. Bute himself did not long survive relinquishing the Rectorship for he died at Cumnock House, his home in Dumfriesshire on 9 October 1900, the day that Donaldson was due to deliver his annual Address on opening the session: as a mark of respect he cancelled the proceedings.[2]

After meeting of the Court on 29 December and knowing that Bute would no longer be Chairman, Donaldson felt a great weight lifted from him. He and Mary immediately left St Andrews and with light hearts travelled to Oxford where they had decided to build a house. They returned to St Andrews before the end of January and on the last Sunday of the month, while at Raith near Kirkaldy, the home of Ronald Munro Ferguson and his wife, Lady Helen[3], Mary's kinswoman, Donaldson experienced for the first time the excitment of a "ride" on a motor car. It was the last year of the century now and the future betokened no change in what seemed to many people an eternal noon of peace and prosperity.

1. The new Rector was MP for Shoreditch and Editor of the Morning Leader.
2. Although he did not deliver his Address he had as usual sent copies in advance to the press.
3. Lady Helen Hermione Blackwood (d. 1941), the daughter of the 1st Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, married Ronald Munro-Ferguson in 1889.

# CHAPTER 13.

Donaldson's step-son, Samuel Laing, originally had ideas of becoming a Professor at a Scottish University or, like his paternal grandfather, entering Parliament. Whether or not he made any efforts to fulfill such ambitions, or indeed where he was or what he was doing between graduating and 1897 is unknown. That year he entered Cuddestone Theological College in Oxford and in December 1898 was appointed curate of the parish church at Headington Quarry, a village two miles north east of Oxford.

Since the parish had no house for the curate, Sam and his maiden aunt, Caroline Riddell Webster - they made their home together as a permanent arrangement - had to find somewhere to live. Mary met this situation by deciding to build a house: not only would it provide a roof for her son and sister, for whom she felt some responsibility, but it would also provide a holiday home for Donaldson and herself since Mary had many friends around Oxford and Donaldson found Oxford society, both socially and professionally, congenial. Mary set to work with a will, leasing half an acre of glebe land adjoining the vicarage from the Bishop of Oxford and soon she and Donaldson were busy with architects and builders. The chosen site, Donaldson declared, was "a lovely and healthy spot"[1] with a westwards view over the open fields towards the ever changing aquatint of distant spires that was Oxford. The emphasis on health was important since Sam was already showing signs of the nervous disorders which would progressively worsen as he grew older but the address was not smart. As its name suggests, the village of Quarry comprised a community of stoneworkers whose

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/200. Letter to Lord Rosebery, 3 January 1899.

lowly cottages were scattered haphazardly around the parish church.[1] The local limestone was hewn from a number of open quarries in the vicinity and one of these happened to be at the rear of the Donaldson's house. An Oxford architect and builder were duly engaged but Mary, whose house it was, soon discovered that trying to supervise building a house in Oxfordshire while living at a distance, presented problems. In September 1899 the difficulties pursued them to the Fortingall Hotel, where she and Donaldson were holidaying, when the architect tried to reassure them with explanations about the cause of the delays.[2] Eventually a large and substantial house - red brick with stone facings - was built, boasting six bedrooms and a carriage drive.[3]

Mary regularly travelled to Oxford to stay at Quarry House with her son and sister. Donaldson would accompany whenever he could but often University affairs held him in St Andrews. Without Mary's presence, Scores Park always seemed very empty: "The house is very quiet" Donaldson wrote sadly to her the day after she had left on one of these visits, "and you are much missed."[4] Although by now - he was seventy in 1901 - his eyes were beginning to trouble him, he would write to

1. The information on the social and economic history of Quarry was provided by the staff of Birmingham Education Department Study Centre, Headington Quarry.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Executory Papers.
3. The present incumbent of Quarry Church, the Reverend Canon R.E. Head, on learning of the circumstances in which Quarry House was built observed that this "has illuminated an obscure period in this Parish's history. It has always seemed peculiar to me that vague parish memory should have held that Quarry House, a building almost as large as the Vicarage and standing adjacent to it had been the Curate's house in a Parish which had never possessed such a property." Letter to the author, 6 January 1986.
4. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers. Ms 6337. Letter to Mary Donaldson, 1 October 1902.

her almost every day she was away, of events in St Andrews, what had been happening in the garden she tended so carefully and always how much he looked forward to her return.

Sam was ordained in the summer of 1900 and in the first years of the new century Mary was untiring in her efforts to find him a living, a task made the more difficult since it was acknowledged that Sam "would never be much of a preacher with so weak a voice."[1] The exercise of patronage had achieved much for her husband and Mary now endeavoured to harness these connections for her son's advantage. Rosebery assured her that although he had only two livings in his gift, he would gladly have given Sam the living at Mentmore had she written earlier.[2] Since this living had been filled, whether he would have appointed Sam as willingly as he professed was not put to the test. The Bishop of Oxford was no more helpful and it was not until 1903 that Sam was offered the living at St George's at Whatley, near Frome in Wiltshire, largely due to the influence of another of Donaldson's prominent and well connected friends, Richard Haldane.[3] Sam had eventually found a living because as Mary's son he automatically had access to his stepfather's well

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6724, letter from Mary Laing to Mary Donaldson, 10 December (1900?). Sam's enfeebled voice was probably a manifestation of a nervous condition which was to develop into neurasthenia. Despite this not inconsiderable handicap for a clergyman, his aunt had "grand views that he is fit for any position." Ibid. Indeed, Sam and Caroline present an unusual ménâge as described by his aunt Mary Laing, "Caroline is devoted to Sam . . . she never agitates him and prevents him getting nervous and likes to play all sorts of games with him." Ibid: Ms 7912, letter to Mary Donaldson, undated but evidently written about this time.
2. Ibid: Ms 7192, letter from Lord Rosebery, 4 August 1901. This is the only letter from Rosebery among the Donaldson Papers.
3. Richard Burdon Haldane (1856-1928) cr 1911, 1st and only Viscount Haldane. The Donaldson's were on several occasions his guests at Cloan, near Auchterarder, the home shared with his remarkable mother, Mary Elizabeth Haldane of Cloan whose life spanned the century 1825 to 1925.

placed and influential friends, for Victorian Society earnestly utilised connections and influence to promote the advancement of its own members; privilege ensured preferement. The offer of this parish in the depths of rural Wiltshire to a feeble voiced clergyman was solely due to the inter-related nature of this mutually supportive class. The living was in the gift of Sir John Horner - Jack to his intimates - of Mells Abbey, Frome, a dedicated Liberal; his wife, Frances, was a life long friend of Margot Asquith both being counted as prominent members of the exclusive and intellectually famous group known as "The Souls", and in 1907 the Horner's only daughter Katherine was to marry Asquith's eldest son, Raymond.[1] Donaldson had been sharing political platforms with Asquith since the latter entered Parliament with his election for East Fife in 1886 and after the widowed Asquith married the redoubtable Margot Tennant in 1895 they were attracted to St Andrews for the golf. Mary's position as the wife of the Principal who was also the foremost Liberal in the locality and her knowledge of London

1. The Horners were the direct descendants of Little Jack Horner, immortalised in the nursery rhyme; the plum he pulled out was Mells Abbey which came into the possession of the family at the time of the Dissolution of religious foundations under Henry VIII and had remained their seat ever since. The connections - forming interconnected webs of influence - might be extended indefinitely: the Conservative A.J. Balfour liked the world to believe that he had been engaged to Frances Horner's sister and that he never wanted to marry anyone after she died. He did however transfer his devotion for life to Mary, Lady Elcho later Lady Wemyss, whose daughter, Cynthia, married Asquith's son, Herbert (Beb). When Sir Edward Grey (1st and only Viscount Grey of Falloden) was widowed in 1906 he shared Haldane's London home until in 1922 he remarried, his second wife being Pamela, the widow of Edward Tennant, 1st Lord Glenconnor, Margot Asquith's eldest brother. Mary Elcho and Pamela Glenconnor were sisters (Sargent made them famous in his painting The Wyndham Sisters - Mary, Pamela and Madeline, Mrs Adeane painted in the Wyndham drawing room in Berkley Square and now in the Metropolitan, New York) the daughters of Percy Wyndham of Clouds whose brother, Lord Leconfield was married to Rosebery's sister, Connie.

Society assured her of being the recipient while Margot was in St Andrews of the inimitable letters she scribbled with a pencil stub every morning in bed. Appeals for advice about suitable houses to lease alternated with hasty invitations to dinner, invariably to meet other Liberals, which were returned at Scores Park.

There was also occasions when Donaldson's position enabled him to offer more than hospitality. He and Haldane shared a profound admiration of German culture to which both over the years made frequent and generous reference. Until the irrational hysteria which anything with any German association evoked during the Great War, there was nothing pejorative or disloyal in advertising oneself to be pro-German in this way; Haldane had no hesitation in announcing that he regarded Germany as his "cultural home", for which a heavy price would be exacted in the future. In 1903, Donaldson invited Haldane - who that year had been instrumental in Sam at last being offered a living, to Mary's infinite relief and gratitude - to deliver the Gifford Lectures, following which he offered him "informally but pressingly"[1] the Chair of Moral Philosophy which had become vacant on the death of Professor Ritchie. Donaldson must have known that there was little likelihood of Haldane's Parliamentary commitments affording him the time, or of such a cosmopolitan politician having any inclination forthe provincial society of St Andrews.

1. R.B. Haldane, An Autobiography, (Lond., 1929) p.154. Haldane asserted that it was as a result of his recommendation that Bernard Bosanquet was appointed to the Chair. Bosanquet retained the professorship only until 1908 when he resigned on grounds that he found original work and the preparation of lectures incompatible. It seemed likely that Donaldson's offer was verbal since there is no reference to it in the Haldane Papers.

Haldane declined but was nonetheless sufficiently flattered by the sincerity of Donaldson's offer of the Chair - the rest of the University apparently knew nothing about it - to record the episode in his autobiography.

Mary Donaldson had great kindness and no effort was too great when her motivation was the happiness and comfort of others, qualities which were combined with a perceptive social awareness. When a number of Donaldson's friends and admirers subscribed for a portrait it was Mary who made all the arrangements for him to be painted by Sir George Reid, the foremost portraitist of his day in Scotland. The artist also had been a pupil at Aberdeen Grammar School and although some years younger than Donaldson their reminiscences formed much of the conversation while Donaldson was giving Reid sittings in his Einburgh studio between November 1904 and the following February. The portrait was exhibited in April 1906 at the New Gallery in Edinburgh and later that summer at the Royal Academy in London. It was considered an excellent likeness, yet "carried out as it is with an uncompromising severity of style it makes him a trifle severe in aspect."[1] Mary's niece, the wife of the Greek Ambassador, thought it "a magnificent painting but though it has the dignity and features of the original, I missed the kindly expression."[2] The truth was that no portrait, however good, could convey the attraction of his personality. So much of the impression which he made on people was due to his quiet voice of a northern Scot, which he never attempted to overlay with any academic tone, and to his gentle and friendly manner was combined a simple but convincing assurance. These nuances of voice and manner were an individual and

1. The Scotsman, 21 April 1906.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6476. Letter from Florence Gennadius, 9 May 1909.

inseparable part of the man, they were what all who met him remembered and as incapable of being captured and retained for posterity as a ripple on the sand. Rosebery, who knew Donaldson so well for so long and had seen him in days of both sun and shadow described him in words which complement the limitations of canvas and paint. "His shrewd, kindly, Scots face was one not to be forgotten, it has the beauty of expression and was eminently attractive; a face that Raeburn should have painted."[1]

But Mary believed that her husband deserved greater worldy recognition for his long labours on behalf of education - over half a century - than a subscription portrait for the Senate Room. Nor was she alone in her conviction that recognition from the Government was long overdue. In 1898 Professor Knight [2] had written to Rosebery about an honour for the Principal and similarly to the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury. Donaldson repaid Knight for his disinterested endeavour - he acknowledged that Knight was very loyal to him - by excusing his action to Rosebery with the ungenerous, not to say disparaging, comment that "Knight has a passion for writing to people whom he regards as important. But no attention need be paid to him".[3] None was. On learning that Knight had approached Salisbury, Donaldson - at least so he told Rosebery - requested him to write again and let Salisbury know that he had no wish for any honour. This strains credibility since he accepted such without demur when eventually it was offered and it may equally be questioned whether he actually asked Knight to write again to

1. The Aberdeen University Review, 1915 Vol. II, No 6, p.14.
2. William Angus Knight (1836-1916). Professor of Moral Philosophy at St Andrews 1876-1902.
3. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/204, letter to Lord Rosebery, 3 January 1899.

Salisbury. One might ask whey he did not write to Salisbury himself: the Prime Minister, whatever his politics, would have had no difficulty in acceding to the refusal of what had never been offered.

Nothing came of these approaches and in April 1902 Mary decided to pursue the matter further herself. Queen Victoria had died in January the previous year and the new King, Edward VII, was due to be crowned in the summer; in April Mary wrote a private note to Rosebery requesting that he use his influence to secure an honour for her husband in the forthcoming Coronation honours. "You know how much I love and esteem the Principal", he replied urbanely from his steam yacht, Zaida, in the Mediterranean. Yet he declined in the most definite terms to do anything whatsoever, professing that he had no influence with Salisbury's Government and, moreover, "could not ask anything of them; even were it considered proper - which it is not - for an ex minister to interfere with the patronage of his successors. I hope," he continued crushingly, "you will not set your heart on the particular honour you mention. There would be no precedent for it."[1]

It cannot now be discovered what honour Mary was seeking but since it must certainly have been more than a knighthood it must surely have been a peerage. Whatever it was, after all that Donaldson had done for Rosebery - and the hostility he had earned in some quarters as a result - such a brusque and unequivocal response is surprising. It was as specious as it was absurd for him to write of interfering with

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 7193, letter from Lord Rosebery, 12 April 1902.
It is evident how cynical Rosebery now was about anything to do with politics: "I know nothing of the course which coronation honours are likely to take, but I should be surprised if they assumed the form of rewards of merit, judging by the past record of politics." Ibid.

the Government's patronage for as both he and Mary knew, political affiliation had much less significance in determining the recipients of Coronation honours than at other times. Even allowing that since he had virtually thrown away the premiership and later resigned the leadership of the Party, Rosebery's temperamental and vacillating behaviour had lost him supporters and disillusioned others, he remained on intimate terms with many influential members of Society across the political spectrum. Had he felt the least inclination, it would have been easy and natural for him to bring Donaldson's work in the field of education over so many years to the attention of someone in the Government, more particularly since recognition was not being sought for politcal work; he had been no less energetic in the cause of education during Tory governments than during Liberal administrations. It would be easy to construe Rosebery's attitude as indicating that he had no interest in doing anything for his old friend and was not to be cajoled into the inconvenience, however small, of doing so. Such a judgment may indeed reflect how he felt but also it may be less than Rosebery deserves. Donaldson and he had seen less of each other in recent years but that was due to the circumstances of both having changed. At critical junctures in Donaldson's life, Rosebery had succeeded in getting him a Chair at Aberdeen and then the Principalship at St Andrews in the face of strong and often vociferous opposition and in this may lie an explanation for his stance now. For many Tories could still recall the circumstances of Principal Donaldson's appointment, it had outraged them then and it still rankled. Rosebery may have been apprehensive, or even had certain knowledge, that to suggest Donaldson for an honour would reactivate the anger and resentment the latter's appointment had aroused and, by inescapable association,

his own part in it. Tories may have believed that Donaldson had done well enough - some too well - from political patronage to deserve anything more and Rosebery, intent on a quiet life had no intention of prejudicing the peaceful equilibrium of his days by opening a Pandora's box.

Mary had to resign herself to the realisation that there would be no prospect of her husband being honoured in this way until there was a change of government. The new reign. however, had its compensations and in May the following year, 1903, Mary was presented to the King when he held his first Court at Holyrood Palace. She was still plain Mrs Donaldson but on occasions like these, with a fichu of Brussels lace and a white aigrette in her silvered black lace and white chiffon toque[1], Mary played her rôle as wife of the St Andrews Principal to perfection.

The long Conservative ascendancy continued into the new century but by now there were indications that the Government's support throughout the country was waning for employers had taken full advantage of the Taff Vale judgment in 1901 which struck at the very heart of trade union action[2] and the prospect of protection, which Chamberlain was urging, filled the working class with alarm. In 1902 Arthur Balfour had succeeded his uncle, Salisbury, as Prime Minister and in the autumn of the following year there was a General Election. Notwithstanding the sudden fall of Rosebery's political star, Donaldson remained keenly interested in Liberal politics, both in the St Andrews Burghs, where he remained a prominent figure in the Liberal organisation there, and

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, scrapbook.
2. The judgement prevented trades unions from taking any strike action to raise wages or prevent them being lowered and, if they did so, risked losing all their funds.

in the wider political scene beyond. "In politics Principal Donaldson is a consistent Liberal," The Dundee Advertiser declared at this time, although it could not have been news to many of its readers, "and none of the most trusted advisers of the party, in whose cause he has done yeoman service, and for which he is every ready to do battle."[1] On the eve of a By-Election in the St Andrews Burghs in September 1903 he presided at a meeting in St Andrews Town Hall, addressing the crowd with his memories of the sufferings he had witnessed as a boy in Aberdeen. He expressed his conviction that anyone with a conscience and sympathy for mankind would vote against fiscal proposals which, he assured his listeners, could only lead to the demoralisation and despair of the people. He was telling the assembly that the question was whether or not they were to bring back this state of affairs, when a voice from the hall shouted a determined "No" and was answered with wild applause.[2] Clearly, age had not wearied Donaldson from joining battle for the Liberals, nor had his power to hold the attention of an audience in anyway diminished. The Liberal candidate, Edward Ellice, was returned for the Burghs but the Conservatives were to remain in power until 1906.

It is not to be imagined that the past years had all been stress and conflict. Both Donaldson and Mary were avid continental travellers and had first journeyed abroad together in 1891. Armed with their Baedeker - it proved disappointingly unreliable - they left in early April for London where a few days were filled with social engagements - Mary particularly liked to see Rosebery's motherless children in their new home in Berkely Square - before crossing to Calais and on to Paris and then Italy. Mary had never been in Rome before and was ecstatic. After the cold of St Andrews everything here was sunlit

1. Advertiser, 1 October 1903.
2. Ibid: 17 September 1903.

and en fleur with peach blossom and lilac, violets and wisteria. Together, they passed their days driving in an open victoria to the Colosseum or the Palace of Tiberius, inspecting the treasures of the Vatican or just watching the life of the Eternal City, amidst its Latin voices and plashing fountains. One day they breakfasted at the British Embassy, all marble and frescoes, where the Ambassador, Mary's kinsman Lord Dufferin, gallantly presented her with a bouquet of roses; for the fortunate with affluence and leisure this was indeed l'Era Violette.

Donaldson was never short of introductions to the cognoscenti and he and Mary often met people they knew. The days were filled with enthusiastic sightseeing but Mary was not uncritical; the hotels seldom came up to her exacting standards and neither did the latin churches. One day they walked to the Laterη Church, "one of the finest in Rome, but all frescoes, gilding, marble and upholstery. I cannot say these churches impress me at all,"[1] she confided to her diary. Several more days inspecting churches only confirmed her first impression, "all the churches in Rome are the same gorgeous overloaded, pagan looking edifices . . . Old Rome seems very close indeed." While such proximity to old Rome made Mary more conscious of its pagan than civilized aspects, it must have thrilled her husband. One day as they strolled along the Corso the Queen of Italy drove past in her carriage and as Donaldson raised his hat he was favoured with a gracious bow. They left Rome earlier than planned on account of the heat and noise but despite the Romans being so ill bred as to keep them awake bawling late at night and starting up their discordant cries early in the morning and the Hotel d'Angleterre being no more than "very fairly comfortable" they both loved Rome and were to return year after year.

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 9/9. Information on the Donaldson's time abroad is taken from Mary's lengthy travel diary which she had typed on her return.

That year they went on to Florence and then Bologna where Donaldson renewed his acquaintance with the Marchese Albergati whose guest he had been in 1889 when representing St Andrews at the eight hundredth anniversary of Bologna University. Their Italian idyll took them to Venice and from there, Milan. Mary was enraptured by the cathedral and each evening after dinner she and Donaldson would sally forth from the Grand Hotel - again "very uncomfortable and badly managed" - to gaze on it, the while marble illuminated against a sapphire sky hung with stars. And so they continued their homeward journey, staying at Stresa - the hotel scored much better "most comfortable, and so nice and clean and the people civil" - Locarno, Luzerne, Basle and Paris arriving home in St Andrews on 8 June. The pattern of subsequent tours had been established, for they were to travel abroad almost every year during their life together, leaving St Andrews as soon as the session finished and returning in June.

Initially the students had been apprehensive of his advent but they had been readily won over with no greater effort on his part than just being himself. As Rector and Professor he had never been distant, nor was he now as Principal; his manner of scholarly benevolence ensured that he was always accessible and easy to approach and he soon earned the reputation of knowing personally every undergraduate in the University.[1] He was rarely in too much of a hurry to stop and chat to the students he encountered as he walked every day from his home, along The Scores and down Butts Wynd to his office or around the University, greeting them with a hearty handclasp and invariably leaving them with

1. University of Aberdeen, Records of the Arts Class 1881-85, Ed. J. Minto, (Aber., 1908). p.8. In 1890 the University for the first time had over two hundred students. Two hundred and one enrolled that year.

some fatherly counsel and advice. With that regard born of affection, they always referred to him as "Jeems", knowing well that his concern for them individually extended to every aspect of their lives. Although a Union had been opened in 1888 - at first in temporary premises before moving in 1892 to the corner of Butts Wynd - student facilities remained very limited with none of the ancilliary services taken for granted nowadays. Both the Donaldsons gave freely of their time to the welfare of individual students, gladly undertaking tasks that would become the responsibility of Student Housing, Health and Counselling. Confident of a welcome, students and parents alike came to him for help and advice and none went empty away for Donaldson was not only knowledgeable and wise in the ways of the world but warm hearted and caring. As Principal he was respected but as a man, beloved.

Often students with no education beyond a parish school would approach Donaldson with a letter of introduction. For example in 1892 Lady Breadalbane wrote Donaldson about "a lad who has never been away from a country village",[1] who had been helping in the country school there but wanted to improve himself. The Donaldsons were friendly with the Breadalbanes, staying with them at Taymouth Castle in Strathtay or at Black Lodge near Tyndrum. Alma Breadalbane's interest in her protégé was not confined to his academic performance; when she learned that he had moved into lodgings in North Street she promptly asked Mary "to find out if these are suitable and respectable lodgings and if the landlady is a sensible woman and there are not young girls in the house . . ."[2] Mary inspected the lodgings and duly reported that

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 7769, letter from Lady Breadalbane, 2 September 1892. The youngest daughter of the 4th Duke of Montrose, Alma Breadalbane was the wife of the 1st Marquis and 7th Earl. She died in 1932.
2. Ibid: Ms 6134, letter from Lady Breadalbane, 10 October 1894.

she had found them perfectly satisfactory although the lad had to share a bed. Three years later, Lady Breadalbane removed her student from the University after he failed to pass the exams. It seems that he fell into that category of student which Donaldson had deprecated before the Royal Commission in 1878, the young man who, in the absence of an entrance exam, could attend a University but who in reality was wasting his time. Even in the last decade of the nineteenth century the tradition that the lad o' pairts might go direct to the University from a parish school still survived.

In 1892 the University had admitted women for the first time and four years later a women's residence, University Hall, opened its doors with Louisa Lumsden,[1] the first Headmistress of St Leonard's School, as Warden. "(T)hose students," Donaldson remarked at the opening of the Hall, "who had the old independent Scottish spirit would, of course, go into lodgings, while those who liked would prefer conventual rule under Miss Lumsden",[2] who instantly took umbrage at this "lukewarm welcome,"[3] Miss Lumsden is notable as the only woman on record who was impervious to Donaldson's charm but from her memoirs one may surmise that it would have been a rare man indeed who could have charmed Miss Lumsden. "I was warned," she later wrote of this time, "that I was venturing to undertake a hopeless talk, and five stormy years did indeed follow."[3] Donaldson acknowledged her academic and administrative ability, but, ever conscious of her position and with a temperament short on humour, she was quick to detect what she saw as threats to her authority.

1. Louisa Innes Lumsden (1840-1935). After passing the Classical Tripos with Honours at Girton College, Cambridge in 1873 Louisa Lumsden became a classical tutor there and a mistress at Cheltenham Ladies College before being the first Headmistress of St Leonards School, St Andrews (1877-1882).
2. Dame Louisa Lumsden, Yellow Leaves, Memories of a Long Life, (Edin., & Lond., 1933), p.40.
3. Ibid.

"I'm not beaten yet!"[1] she wrote defiantly to Donaldson on one such occasion and this exemplified their relationship. Confronted by Miss Lumsden, whose hackles seem to have been almost permanently raised, Donaldson remained unperturbable.

Financially, too, the University was knowing better days. In 1890 it had learned of a bequest amounting to £100,000 from the will of Alexander Berry of Coolangatta in New South Wales, who had only the most tenuous connection with the University. Although it was to be over a decade before the full amount was received,[2] £10,000 was available almost immediately and this enabled the University to meet some of its most pressing debts and liabilities.[3] The Donaldsons also personally benefitted. In 1891 the owner of Scores Park again offered the property for sale and an anxious time followed for Donaldson and Mary who were dismayed at the prospect of having to find somewhere else to live. St Andrews was not as deficient in fine houses as Donaldson told Rosebery when he leased the mansion but there was certainly nowhere as grand as Scores Park. "We are at present in the power of a crusty landlord," bemoaned Donaldson. "And I have not the heart to

1. St. Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, letter from Lousia Lumsden, 1 November 1898.
2. This was largely due to the severe depression in the Australian colonies, affecting particularly rural land which comprised the estate.
3. The extent of the University's financial embarrassment can be gauged from the fact that £1,149 was owing to the Scottish Widow's Fund, £1,377 to endowments for certain bursaries and a further £795 was owed by the University Court for Feu and Teind Duties payable in respect of lands which belonged to the United College and which the University had been called on to purchase from the Crown under the provisions of the 1888 Act. A further £2,000 was set aside and invested, the interest to be for the benefit of the Principal and Professors of St Mary's College and for the Professors of Chemistry and Education, none of whom shared in the revenues of the Colleges.
University Court Minutes, Meeting 7 November 1891, p.152-3.

arrange my books properly until I know what kind of habitation I have permanently."[1] Donaldson had leased the property in anticipation that the University might ultimately be persuaded to buy it but even with the receipt of the first money from the Berry Bequest, a home for the Principal was far down the list of priorities. Then the executor in Sydney, Dr Hay, as a token of good faith that the full amount would eventually be paid, himself offered to give £5,000 to the University for the purchase of a home for the Principal and after some haggling over the price, £6,000 was agreed, the additional thousand pounds being put up by Donaldson until the University was in the position to repay him. It was a condition of Hay's gift that Scores Park would be the home of the Principal of the University in perpetuity.

The University had now entered on a period of progress and development so long retarded by Bute's Rectorship: the first decade of the new century, when "wonderful smoothness and perfect peace reign"[2], was sharply contrasted to the years which had preceded it. The University had also advanced materially for in 1901 the students elected Andrew Carnegie as Rector. The new Rector took a personal interest in the University but his munificence also reflected the close personal friendship which rapidly developed between the Carnegies and the Donaldsons. Carnegie, the son of a Dunfermline weaver, shared with Donaldson the experiences of humble origins and although their lives had been very different both, through their own efforts, had risen from poor backgrounds to become prominent in public life. Born in 1834, Carnegie was only four years younger than Donaldson and the relationship which

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/141, letter to Lord Rosebery, 15 November 1891.
2. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/208, letter to Lord Rosebery, 14 December, 1904.

they shared was wider than a mutual interest in advancing education. When they first met is uncertain; Carnegie was a close friend of Rosebery and John Morley and beginning in 1888 spent several months every summer in Scotland, first at Cluny Castle near Bonar Bridge and then at his own Scottish home, Skibo Castle, near Dornoch. The earliest surviving letter from Carnegie to Donaldson is from New York in November 1896 but the postscript referring to Rosebery's resignation of the Premiership indicates that their friendship was well established by this time[1].

The creation of the Carnegie Trust for Scottish Universities in 1901 had brought Carnegie to the forefront of Scottish education. Of the ten million dollars settled in the trust, the income from half was to be used for expansion and research and that from the other half to pay the class expenses of such undergraduates as applied for exemption. Carnegies's first idea had been that his gift should be the means of abolishing fees but so deep in Scotland was the concept that education was something worth paying for that his generosity was repaid in the early days by the most virulent attacks. So great was the outcry that as a concession to popular feeling it was decided that the Trust would pay the class fees only of those students who applied for exemption, it being assumed that none other than really needy students would take advantage of this and it was indeed many years before a means test was introduced. Notwithstanding, in some quarters, opposition was bitter and sustained; at late as 1913, more than a decade after the Trust was founded, the reactionary Tory Professor Harrower, whose appointment to the Greek Chair at Aberdeen had so outraged Donaldson

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6143, letter from Andrew Carnegie, 23 November 1896.
   It is clear from this postcript that Donaldson's keen interest in Rosebery was known to Carnegie: "So glad Rosebery is once more a <u>man</u> - his position was pitiful, the tool of well meaning but foolish friends."

Donaldson in 1886, was still rampaging against the Trust "for stressing the need to graduate and therefore directing students into soft options, for killing several useful classes in medicine and arts, for encouraging dissipation in a class of men in whose case poverty was an all important safeguard, for discouraging by its entry requirements many good self taught men, for paying the fees of thousands who could quite well pay their own and for making possible an enormous increase in amusements in Scottish Universities."[1] Donaldson had no patience with such criticisms; he had had ample experience of the constraints placed on Scottish Universities resulting from what he saw as the perennial parsimony of the Treasury. Now not only would the Carnegie manna relieve some of the problems of poor students but the annual income from the Trust would enable the Universities to develop and expand. "It is easy indeed to find fault with the wisdom of him who gives, but it is not a gracious action, and is rarely based on sound grounds . . ."[2] he observed dispassionately and demolished the argument that the gift would "corrupt the Scotch student or his parents and undermine his independence"[3], an assertion easily refuted by reference to countries of Europe in some of which University education was totally free and in all the others the fees were below, most of them well below, those of the Scottish Universities. Donaldson believed the arguments against the Trust were opposed to the practice and ideas that had prevailed in the Scottish Universities for four hundred years, and caused him to reveal publicly for the first time his increasing sympathy for Scottish Nationalism:

1. Quoted, James Scotland, The History of Scottish Education, (Lond., 1969), Vol. , p.154-155.
2. James Donaldson, University Addresses, (Edin., 1911), p.516, Address 13 October 1903.
3. Ibid: p.517.

"The idea which the Scots had of maintaining the Universities was that each person throughout the State should pay in proportion to his income. And there cannot be a doubt that if Scotland had had a separate Legislature to deal with purely Scottish matters, this scheme would have been in operation long ago, and our Scottish Universities would have stood in the foremost rank of national Universities in point of equipment and efficiency." 1

Donaldson was delighted to represent St Andrews on the Trust - each University elected one trustee - in the work of which he was to be actively involved and deeply interested from now until his death.

Beginning in 1901, Carnegie and his wife, Louise, entertained the Principals, of the Scottish Universities together with their wives at Skibo for a week every September. The Carnegies' relations with the Donaldsons was on a different footing from that with the other Principals being personal rather than official; the former were invited a few days earlier and the dates arranged to suit them, the other fitting in. The warm affection between Carnegie and Donaldson was matched in that of their wives who were both much younger than their husbands; Carnegie at fifty one had married Louise when she was only thirty. In 1901 Carnegie was elected Rector and when he arrived to deliver his Inaugural Address a rapturous reception awaited him as his train pulled into St Andrews. As soon as he stepped into his carriage the cheering students unharnessed the horses and themselves pulled the beaming Carnegie to Scores Park.

As the topic of his Address the new Rector had originally chosen to speak about his ideas on religion and theology, with reference to his early life in Dunfermline, the Unitarian teaching of his mother, his reading of Spencer and Darwin and the like. "The essay" according to his biographer, B.J. Hendrick, "is one of the most delightful of

1. Ibid: p.519.

Carnegie's writings, and his strictures on dogma, his insistence on the inner light as one sure guide to religion and right living, would shock few people today."[1] Yet when he submitted his proposed Address to Donaldson for comment, the latter thought it inappropriate both to the time and the occasion[2]. The grounds for his objections are unknown, neither can they be divined and must have appeared the more inexplicable when in September 1907 Donaldson delivered the Murtle Lecture at Skibo and chose as his topic "The practical results of Christ's attitude to the Jewish law", with the significant points that only sin defiles, there is no close time in the service of God and that the service of God and man cannot be limited to any place.[3] Carnegie, however, accepted with his invariable good nature Donaldson's veto, speaking instead on the necessity for the political and economic federalisation of Europe as being the only way Europe could survive in face of the stupendous industrial progress of the United States. When, on being re-elected for a second term in 1904, Carnegie came the following year to compose another Address he revealed his regard for, and deference to, Donaldson when he wrote that Morley had seen his proposed Address and liked it, adding, "I'll show it to you and get your Kind

1. B.J. Hendrick, The Life of Andrew Carnegie, (Lond., 1933), p.530.
2. In 1927 Carnegie's letters to Donaldson were sent to Hendrick in New York. He subsequently wrote to Principal Sir James Irvine "to remind you of the letter which you did not include" specifically relating to this Address" and which Hendrick believed was being "withheld". This letter is not today among Carnegie's letters in the Donaldson Papers although Irvine, who evidently had sent it, noted in his own hand on a letter from Hendrick in 1932 that all the letters had been returned. Neither is there a copy of Carnegie's proposed address.
   St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6203, letter from B.J. Hendrick to Sir James Irvine, 11 October 1927.
   Ibid: Ms 2604, letter from B.J. Hendrick to Sir James Irvine, 6 September 1932.
3. Ibid: Box 9.

and Fatherly advice."[1] Carnegie had been delighted by his first Installation but the second, he told the Donaldsons, had made him even happier. "We felt a deeper note of friendship and goodwill and sense of permanence that nothing can ever alter the deep interest and love we shall ever cherish for deal old St Andrews. And to you dear kind friends what can I say to express our love for you and our deep appreciation . . . Fortunate the University that has such a Principal and above all such a Principal's wife."2

But equally fortunate was the University which had such a Rector. During his first term Carnegie had given a recreation park, complete with a pavilion, laid out at Rathelpie and a gymnasium and Mrs Carnegie was the ostensible donor of a Union for women students. When the Court let it be known to him through his assessor - evidently considered the most tactful way of getting the message across - that with the provision of additional funds the use of these facilities would be greatly extended for the benefit of the students (a highly trained superintendent for the gym would be particularly appreciated) Carnegie promptly donated £10,000 in Bonds yielding £500 clear annually to be distributed among the various facilities.[3] It is readily understandable if Donaldson believed he was onto a good thing but at the same time one suspects that he was determined to make the most of it. In 1906 he mentioned to Carnegie that the University was badly in need of a new library and the Rector responded with the offer of another £10,000 "which you said would be ample."[4] Carnegie, however, scrutinised the

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6173, letter from Andrew Carnegie, 20 August 1905.
2. Ibid: Ms 6226, letter from Andrew Carnegie, 22 October 1905.
3. Ibid: Ms 6174, letter from Andrew Carnegie, 19 September 1905.
4. Ibid: Ms 6187, letter from Andrew Carnegie, 13 August 1906.

expenditure of his bounty with a sharp business eye and when the estimates disclosed that the library would cost a further £2,000 he agreed to send the difference but was neither pleased nor slow to deliver Donaldson a verbal rap for what he saw as financial ineptitude. He carefully examined all the expenses of the library - which Donaldson probably thought unlikely - and declared the proportion of the total cost to be spent on shelving "absurd, but if you know no better that to trust the furnishing of your Library to the Architect, whose duties end when he gives you the building, there is no saying where you may be led. . . . I confess I am surprised that the management of St Andrews in regard to gifts is so loose, as your statement shows it to be - enormous expenditures beyond the sum which the giver ever intended."[1] Carnegie had not lost the businessman's mind which had made him a mega-millionaire and however high his regard for Donaldson, no one took advantage of his generosity.

Carnegie always took a real interest in the affairs of the University and it afforded him immense pleasure to see his money being used for the benefit of the students. Yet he always sought Donaldson's guidance on what form his benefactions might most usefully take and where he could meet the needs of the University - very different from that other wealthy Rector, Bute, who had his own ideas of what the University needed and whose gifts for building were accompanied by conditions and demands. Carnegie and Donaldson shared a mutual regard founded in their humble beginnings and this had deepened with their sharing of a political philosophy. Carnegie looked back on his two terms as Rector as a period of unequalled happiness "much of it flowing" he assured Donaldson, "from my intimacy with yourself and your dear wife."[2]

1. Ibid: Ms 6187.
2. Ibid: Ms 6188, letter from Andrew Carnegie, 6 December 1907.

Donaldson maintained his close interest in teacher training. That the Universities were eventually given a direct part in this owed less to the Education Department being at last persuaded of the Universities' fitness for the task than the training colleges being unable to provide the number of teachers which were required. The decision to reduce the size of classes in 1889 from eighty to seventy resulted in a further deficiency of two thousand teachers and every year the colleges were forced to turn away good candidates. This situation had led in 1895 to the introduction of Queen's Studentships which enabled a student to receive both professional as well as academic training under the auspices of a University. The morals and discipline of student teachers still obsessed the Education Department and so Local Committees were formed in the University towns to supervise these students and to arrange for their practical training in schools approved by the Department. Thus for the first time teacher training was entrusted to secular institutions after being controlled exclusively by the churches for more than half a century. St Andrews formed a Local Committee immediately in 1896[1] and Dundee followed in 1900. With time, the benefits of teachers experiencing University education which Donaldson had so strongly advocated, became apparent for "the broader and deeper culture associated with university studies raised the ideals and aspirations of teachers."[2]

In 1904 Sir Henry Craik with whom Donaldson had so often been at odds, retired and was succeeded by John Struthers[3], Assistant

1. The only other Local Committee established at this time was in Aberdeen.
2. M. Cruikshank, History of the Training of Teachers in Scotland, (Lond., 1970), p.121.
3. John Struthers (1857-1925) had been appointed to the Scottish Inspectorate in 1886.

Secretary of the Education Department since 1900. Almost immediately, Struthers restructured the system of teacher training. In each University town a Provincial Committee for the Training of Teachers was to be established, responsible for a teacher training centre and the organising of courses for practising teachers. Whereas the King's Students' Committees - the Local Committees - had really been voluntary and self constituted, with representatives of the University and the School Board in each University Town, the Provincial Cmmittees were given a definite constitution and representative membership. The Established and Free Church Colleges were to be compensated for the transfer of their colleges, to which they agreed on receiving a guarantee that religious instruction would be continued. The institution of these Provincial Committees meant that the training of teachers at last was recognized as a responsibility of the State and, after being for so long under ecclesiastical control, passed to a secular authority: the logical consequence of the 1872 Act at last had been fulfilled.

Evidently political identification was not considered important at the level of the Provincial Committees for the Conservative Government appointed Donaldson Chairman of the Committee in St Andrews. However, as soon as their composition was learned, he denounced them, for the School Boards were to be given the dominant representation and he realised that the influence of the University members, outweighed by the majority Board Members, would be "nearly entirely local and only nominal. The Universities have nothing to do with the framing or carrying out of the regulations. The Provincial Committees . . . are mere machines in the hands of the Education Department which has the entire control and superintendence of every action of the Committees and of their methods of training, prescribing even the mode of

hemming and stitching which has to be taught."[1]

He was also concerned at the tendency, apparent since soon after the 1872 Act, for increasing numbers of women to enter teaching; "teaching" he declared, "is going entirely into the hands of women," as usual supporting his contention with an armoury of statistics,[2] and he condemned the distinct categories of students created by the regulations - they were termed "University students" and "non-University students" - depending on whether they were to teach in higher grade or primary schools: he considered this an invidious distinction. Students were required to sign an undertaking that they would teach in a state aided school for two years after the completion of their training. He urged students intending to teach to take a degree and follow this with a certificate or diploma awarded by the University and recognised by the Department, enabling the holder of such to each in any of the state aided schools.[3]

In many ways Donaldson's appointment as Chairman of the Provincial Committee had been an obvious, perhaps even inescapable, choice - his position as Principal, his reputation in the field of education both at school and University level and his long and well known interest in teacher training - and he must surely have wanted the position for at seventy five it would not have been difficult for him to decline an additional commitment - but it might well have been more appropriate to have appointed a younger man. In their early years, the Provincial Committees were absorbed with the time consuming details of establishing a new system. The bureaucracy of the procedures and the limited rôle

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 9/16. Although undated this manuscript was evidently written in 1905.
2. Ibid: in 1904, 221 and 1,053 women became certified teachers, in 1903 the figures were 412 and 1,152 respectively.
3. Ibid.

accorded the Universities irritated Donaldson and in 1907 he resigned, not only the Chairmanship but from the Committee itself. He may have felt that it was time to hand over to someone younger but it was unlike him to relinquish something he enjoyed which suggests that he could no longer be bothered with the tedious and petty frustrations inherent in dealing with a Government Department and he would have no difficulty persuading himself that at his age he no longer had to. The latter seems likely since he continued to be keenly interested in teachers and their training and in 1908 took an active part in the first Summer School for teachers to be held in St Andrews, which was to become an annual event.[1]

For a man in his seventies, Donaldson's energy remained astonishing. He made no concessions to the advancing years; he conscientiously discharged all the duties of the Principalship, his interest in all aspects of school and University education was undiminished and he continued to write. In 1905 he published The Westminster Confession of Faith and the Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England, and the following year returned to his interest in the ancient world with Woman: Her Position and Influence in Ancient Greece and Rome, and Among the Early Christians, none of which proved controversial. Of greater interest to a wider public were his articles on Universities published in The University Review.

A Block on the Progress of the Scottish Universities[2] appeared in October 1905 and the tone is noticably different from that of his

1. These proved very successful; 144 attended in 1908 and the numbers had almost doubled by 1910 when 268 teachers availed themselves of the Summer School.
2. The University Review, No. 6, Vol. II.

earlier comments on how ill suited much legislation affecting Scottish education had been. In earlier days he had levelled criticism at the drafting believing this reflected a profound lack of understanding or knowledge of Scotland's educational institutions among politicians south of the Border. Donaldson's attitude had clearly undergone a fundamental change, his grievance shifting from the legislation itself to be placed uncompromisingly on the form of government to which Scotland was subjected - "whatever defects may be found in the financial arrangements and the course of study in the Universities must be laid at the door of the Houses of Parliament."[1] He went on to identify the genesis of the problem in the mode of legislating which had resulted in legislation being enacted to the detriment of Scottish education. Acts, Donaldson was convinced, could not be expected to be "necessarily the wisest and the best. Generally the individual who draws up the Bill is imperfectly acquainted personally with the Scottish Universities, and the Members of Parliament suggest amendments much less frequently from their own consideration on the questions involved than from pressure put upon them by some of their influential constituents."[2]

He regarded the work of the University Commissioners appointed in 1889 in relation to the preparation of Ordinances as vitally important and therefore of the greatest consequence that the Commissioners should be well informed on how Scottish Universities functioned. But what Donaldson regarded as a fundamental qualification of Commissioners had not been apparent in their selection and he had often found them deficient in this knowledge. His experience with the Commissioners had left him strongly convinced that ". . . evidence can never give

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.

the accurate knowledge and the enthusiasm which can arise from personal acquaintance and interest."[1]

Donaldson had strongly supported Lyon Playfair's clause in the Universities (Scotland) Bill which would have established a General University Court when the Commission came to an end. This would have had the power to cut through the impossible situation which now existed whereby any University seeking an Ordinance had to wait while the Universities Committee had circulated the proposed Ordinance to the other three Universities for their Comments. The Universities Committee was composed entirely of Privy Councillors and only rarely were there men on the former who had an accurate personal knowledge of the Scottish Universities. Despite this, Donaldson observed ironically, "the Committee is regarded as being well able to take evidence and give a sound legal opinion"[2] concerning the Scottish Universities. Thus such was the membership of the Universities Committee and the procedure which had been established for the comments and consent of all the Universities on proposed Ordinances or amendments for any of them. The opportunities for delay and obstruction inherent in this system meant that it was virtually impossible to secure approval for Ordinances or, what was often even worse, to effect amendments to those in existence. In short, there was in reality a complete deadlock in the procedures established for making and altering Ordinances.

This article was followed in April 1907 by another in The University Review, this time entitled, The Scotch Universities, the State and the Privy Council. The Universities (Scotland) Act of 1889 had

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

established a Commission but a significant feature distinguished this from its predecessors. It was provided that on the expiry of the Commission, which occurred in 1897, the four Universities were to be its successors. Accordingly when the Commission ceased to exist in 1897 the Universities inherited all the powers which formerly had belonged to the Commission; its powers were entrusted to the Universities on the same conditions as those imposed on the Commission - their Ordinances were required to be laid before the Privy Council for the approval of Her Majesty in Council. The Privy Council did not have the power to alter any Ordinances laid before it but only to approve an Ordinance as it stood or to delete from it and approve with the deletions.[1]

The difficulties in this sort of procedure had been early recognised. As early as 1858 it had been proposed that there should be one University for the whole of Scotland in which the existing Universities would become constituent colleges, an idea which Gladstone had revived in the early 1880s. Donaldson was convinced that the General Council would have solved many of these difficulties for

> "instead of endless printed logmachies devised separately the Universities would have an opportunity of discussing the various ordinances together, exchanging views on them, and coming to some understanding in regard to them. Then the General Court could approach the Secretary for Scotland on any matter that might require legislation . . . in this way the General Council, if the composition of it were well arranged, might become an exceedingly powerful agent in directing the whole education of the country." 2.

Donaldson had become convinced that such an impossible situation which caused endless delays and often effectively meant that nothing

1. "The mode of procedure which has been adopted is about the clumsiest and most imperfect that can be well conceived." Ibid.
2. Ibid.

was done, would be overcome if the legislation were enacted closer to home by men who from background and experience of Scotland's traditions and institutions oculd legislate for these from intimate knowledge.

The Conservatives had been returned again in 1900 but the Government rang its death knell soon after when it implemented Milner's recommendation that 60,000 Chinese coolies be imported to work the gold fields of South Africa, it outraged the working class at home and was resented by the Dominions which had come to Britain's aid during the South African War. In December 1905, Balfour concluded that he could no longer continue but instead of seeking a dissolution he resigned, hoping that his Liberal successor, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, would be unable to form a workable Liberal ministry. The General Election in January 1906 revealed the extent to which Balfour's judgment had erred for the results were a catastrophe for the Conservatives unmatched since the old Toryism had been swept away at the election of 1833. Balfour, in company with many of his Cabinet colleagues, was defeated: the Conservatives were reduced to 167 seats - the Liberals with 377 enjoyed a majority of 84 over all the other parties combined, their position further strengthened by the support of both the Labour and Irish members.

Donaldson had known the new Prime Minister for several years and in their personalities shared much in common. Both were quiet and unassuming but wholly informed of all that was afoot, equally skilled at disarming and reconciling opposition and having that shrewd experience and knowledge of men and the world which generally ensured that their own views prevailed. Although a successful business man spending much of his life in London, Campbell-Bannerman had represented the Stirling

Burghs for many years and had an affinity with the east coast of Scotland, endeavouring to spend as much time as he could at his estate, Belmont Castle, near Meigle. Donaldson cannot have been greatly surprised when in June 1907 he received a letter marked "Secret" from the Prime Minister asking if he would allow his name to be submitted for a knighthood in the King's Birthday Honours.[1] Although he always had professed his disinterest in such honours, Donaldson certainly never showed it now. Congratulations poured into Scores Park from all over the country, from India, America, the Colonies and Dominions, many from former pupils at the High School and from students who were now spread over the world. There was a widely expressed consensus of opinion that such recognition of a life devoted to the advancement of learning and the promotion of national education in Scotland was long overdue. "His name would have been in the Honour's List long ago," his nephew, Howard Kennedy, remarked, "if this country's honours distributors had a sense of proportion in the matter of public service, especially in the educational sphere."[2]

Many of the letters they received expressed the hope that both of them would be spared for many years to enjoy the honour, but, Mary, who had been Mrs Donaldson for seventeen years, was to enjoy her new style of Lady Donaldson for only twelve months. Early the following year she was unwell; it was cancer and she was often in terrible pain. When in June the Carnegies, newly arrived from America to spend the summer as usual in Scotland, wrote to arrange the annual Principals' Week in September, Donaldson had to tell them how ill Mary was and

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 1/5, letter from Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, 21 June 1907.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 8849, letter from Howard Kennedy, 2 July 1907.

that it would be impossible for them to go to Skibo. "Truly you two have exerted a spell upon us . . ."[1] Carnegie replied and as evidence - if such were now necessary - of the depth of their friendship invited Donaldson to bring Mary to convalesce at Skibo when they would not be troubled with other guests.[2] But Mary, who dearly loved being at Skibo - the Carnegies' company, the easy comfort and vie de luxe - knew that she would never see it again for her condition was hopeless. Yet Donaldson did not know how long she might live and on Tuesday 7 July he went off to a meeting of the Carnegie Trust. That afternoon her condition suddenly worsened; "My beloved" he noted briefly in his diary, "died at 5.10 p.m."

The happiness this marriage brought had been as real as it was apparent; Donaldson had adored Mary and she in her turn made his interests her interests and devoted herself to ensuring his comfort where ever they were, whether in St Andrews or Oxford, in London or travelling abroad and her attractive and amusing presence, her tact and knowledge of the wider world were pivotal to the generous hospitality and entertainment she presided over at Scores Park and to the success of her more public rôle as the Principal's wife. "Lady Donaldson was closely associated with her husband in much of his University work" the Citizen recorded in Tribute, "and she made an admirable hostess at the various public and academic functions she was called upon to take part in . . . her aimiable disposition endeared her too all whom she met."[3]

1. Ibid: Ms 6189, letter from Andrew Carnegie, 16 June 1908.
2. Ibid: Ms 6234, letter from Andrew Carnegie, 23 June 1908.
3. St Andrews Citizen, 11 June 1908. In her memory, the following year Donaldson presented the Women Students' Union with a bookcase and Mary's portrait.

Since Mary was seventeen years younger than Donaldson, he had believed that he would have her love and companionship for as long as he lived; that she might predecease him had seemed so improbable. During the last weeks of her life, knowing that there was no hope of recovery, in her practical and organised manner Mary had put her affairs in order, bequeathing all her estate to her husband. The settlements from her earlier marriages ceased on her death but Donaldson inherited everything else including Quarry House.

Both Donaldson's wives had been capable and accomplished women but yet they were very different. Each had been eminently appropriate, and made a valuable contribution to his success, at different periods of his life - Margaret, older, serious and confident in his ability had brought encouragement and support to a young man making his way in the world; Mary knowing him only after he had arrived, both consolidated and expanded his social position. When Margaret died he had missed her comfortable presence, the sound of a voice that was still, but Mary's death was a much heavier blow. She had been a sympathique companion who shared his social values and view of the world - an enthusiastic and active part of all that comprised his life.

He had seen into the grave both his wives and the son who had lived to manhood; death separated him from all those whom he loved. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: loneliness may be a state of mind rather than a fact but if he was not conspicuously lonely that did not lessen his sense of desolation.

> ALONE . . . the word is life endured and known.
> It is the stillness where the spirits walk.
> And all but inmost faith is overthrown. 1

* * * *

1. Siegfried Sassoon, The Heart's Journey.

That spring, when all Donaldson's thoughts were centred on Mary, Campbell-Bannerman in 10 Downing Street was also dying. In April, when his death was imminent, he summoned Asquith and asked that he succeed him as leader of the Party: in due course Asquith crossed the Channel to receive his commission from the King at Biarritz.[1] The Liberal Government's programme of social reform went forward on a scale beyond all precedent, providing for such things as Old Age Pensions, Workmen's Compensation and the Medical Inspection of Children but when the predominantly Conservative House of Lords threw out the distinctly Liberal measures of Education and Licensing, the Upper House was brought to the forefront of national politics. Disraeli had demonstrated how accomplished a political tactician he was when he allowed Gladstone while Premier between 1868 and 1874, to enact his large legislative programme - including the disestablishement of the Irish Church - and yet had won a Tory victory at the next election. The Lords, however, had secured immense popular support in 1893 when they boldly defeated Gladstone's Home Rule Bill and this success, endorsed as it was by the verdict of the country at the following election, misled the Conservative leaders, Chamberlain, Balfour and Lord Lansdowne, into believing that the Lords could, with equal success, play the same game with the Budget in 1909. This was to prove a serious misjudgment for 1909[2] was not 1893, the twentieth century a much more democratic age, the Liberal Government formidable and supported by the vast majority of the electorate. Rejection of the Budget in the Lords was tantamount to a

1. Asquith was the only Prime Minister to assume office beyond the Realm. However the King's idea that the new Cabinet should travel to Paris and be appointed by him there was speedily quashed.
2. Lloyd George's Budget aroused the hostility of the upper class not only because it proposed to introduce Land Taxes and the quite moderate increase in income tax on the wealthy but because of the greater changes which it envisaged as likely to follow.

claim by the peers that they could cause a General Election whenever they liked.

The year 1910 witnessed two General Elections. The first, in January, resulted in the Liberals losing a hundred seats with the Irish members holding the balance and demanding Home Rule as the price of their support. Although Asquith had not yet obtained an assurance from the King that he would, if necessary, create sufficient Liberal peers to ensure the passing of the Parliament Bill to limit the powers of the Lords, the Irish agreed to support the Government when it gave an undertaking that a Home Rule Bill would follow immediately the Parliament Act. In early May the King died and, although during the obligatory mourning conferences were held in an endeavour to resolve the crisis, no compromise acceptable to both parties was reached. In December the second, and decisive, General Election was held after Asquith had secured the previous month a promise from the new King, George V, that in the event of the Liberal's majority being seriously reduced, he would create sufficient Liberal peers to give the Party the majority in the Lords and thereby enable the Parliament Bill to be enacted. If the King were called to honour his promise, Donaldson was to be one of the new peers.1

That Donaldson was numbered among these potential peers is hardly surprising. He had subscribed to the Liberal political philosophy all his life but more importantly for the past thirty years his support had been given active expression, with his labours for the cause often

1. Although unsubstantiated by documentary evidence, Jean Paterson in later life spoke of Donaldson having been a proposed peer as did her husband, Professor J.D. Mackie, who also knew Donaldson well, having been appointed a lecturer in History at St Andrews in 1908. Donaldson's nomination is supported by strong circumstantial evidence.

at the level of haute politique as well at the more mundane work at constituency level. He had enjoyed long friendships with prominent Liberal Members and devoted Party workers in upper class Liberal society. Had Parliamentary history taken another path and the crofter's illegitimate grandson ennobled, it is improbable that Donaldson's life would have changed. His penchant for lords individually did not extend to them collectively, his enthusiasm for their legislative chamber being no greater than Rosebery's. Besides, by the spring of 1911 Donaldson was eighty and had no inclination to establish himself, even for limited periods, five hundred miles south in London. And he had no intention of retiring from the Principalship.

The University which had been such a large part of his life for more than twenty years before Mary died had become since her loss a family in a true sense, providing the structure of his daily routine, a focus of interest and happenings. His social life was largely a generous extension of these for his hospitality was not reserved for elderly contemporaries, the young being welcomed as warmly and with as much interest as the old. The Secretary of the Hockey Team, invited to dine at Scores Park in 1908, eighty years later retains the fond memory of a Principal, who might have been her grandfather, making a young girl at ease, of his ineffable kindness and charm. What the interior of Scores Park was like has long faded from memory but the thoughtfulness of her host remains indelible.[1]

1. Recollections of Mrs Marjorie Lawson.

# CHAPTER 14.

In October, two months before the election, the result of which would determine whether Donaldson would become a Liberal peer, and when political feeling throughout the country was an an unprecedented pitch, Rosebery was staying at Scores Park. The term as Rector of Lord Avebury, the scientist financier, had ended and with the University's Five Hundredth Anniversary celebrations being planned for 1911 there had been a strong feelng that it would be a good idea to elect a Rector whose generosity could be relied on. Andrew Carnegie was the obvious choice: his open handedness to the University was proven and had he not declared when his second term as Rector ended in 1907 that it was "a wrench and had been a source of continual pleasure to me, the official connection with St Andrews"?[1] Many of the students, however, opposed what they saw as a blatant intention to extract money from the millionaire and when Carnegie heard of this he caused his candidature to be withdrawn. The students elected Rosebery instead.

It is extraordinary that Rosebery had not been elected Rector of St Andrews earlier; not only had he been a close friend of the Principal for thirty years but he had always evinced a profound, knowledgeable and sympathetic interest in Universities. In 1880, during the first year of their friendship, Donaldson had canvassed for his election as Rector of Edinburgh. Since then Rosebery had been elected Rector for Aberdeen and Glasgow and his election at St Andrews gave him the rare distinction of having been Rector of all the Scottish Universities. So he came to St Andrews in October 1910 and was glad to accept the invitation to stay at Scores Park. In his honour, the evening of his arrival the students formed a torchlight procession

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6188, letter from Andrew Carnegie, 6 December 1907.

through the streets of the old town to the Quadrangle of the United College, stopping at the homes of Professors and then at Scores Park. Donaldson was immensely gratified that Rosebery should be accorded such an enthusiastic welcome and delighted with the scene - the acclamation and excitement of the students, many of whom had dressed up, a number in female disguise, and the great crowds of townspeople who also turned out to enjoy the fun.[1] Rosebery and Donaldson were Rector and Principal but once they had bade Goodnight to the student throng cheering on the carriage drive and returned to the comfortable drawing room of Scores Park they were just old friends with plenty to talk about. They saw each other rarely these days and their correspondence, once so prolific, had long ago dried up for Rosebery had felt little inclination to sustain active friendships with many with whom he had been closely associated before his Premiership. Since announcing his opposition to Home Rule for Ireland in 1905 his eclipse had been total: resolute in his determination to avoid any active political involvement and increasingly estranged from the spirit which now actuated the Liberal Party, he had become a spectator rather than a participant but a spectator of great and fateful events. In only a few years the Liberal Government had established a remarkable record of social legislation; Workmens Compensation, Miners' Eight Hours, Medical Inspection for Children and the Children's Act, the Town Planning Act, the Sweated Industries Act, measures covering Unemployment and Health Insurance, Old Age Pensions that had begun to empty the dreaded workhouses and budgets which were progressively shifting increasing taxation onto the wealthy were part of a vast programme to improve the lives of ordinary people. Rosebery's antipathy to the House of Lords had remained strong and now it seemed certain that their Lordships, spiritual and temporal,

1. Ibid: Vl. 18/25, Reynolds Newspaper, 23 October 1910.

were either to have their power curtailed by their own consent or by the creation of an overwhelming number of new Liberal peers, among whm Donaldson would be numbered. To both it seemed that all their political faith represented was even then in the act of being translated from theory into fact and that they had lived to witness the flood tide of Liberalism. Yet unknown to them, this was the highwater mark of Liberal achievement; since the party schism over Ireland and the steady move of the Unionists into the Conservative camp, Rosebery had been concerned that the Liberal rump had been abandoned by most of its wealthy supporters, leaving it perennially short of funds. The financial difficulties of the struggling Labour Party restricted it to limited and sporadic electoral contests which disguised the true extent of its growing support throughout the country, not least in Scotland. Furthermore, the Liberals had support from a number of minority groups with narrowly defined objectives, such as the Temperance Movement. When these groups succeeded in securing legislative expression for their objectives, or broke up or, growing dissatisfied with the Liberals, decided to transfer their support to one of the other parties, the Liberal platform would become ever weaker as one by one its planks fell away. In the latter half of the nineteenth century sectionalism had been a conspicuous feature of Liberalism but in recent years it was increasingly hard to disguise that the Party lacked a coherent and unifying, because generally accepted, ideological base. If either Donaldson or Rosebery had any such disquiet it might be dispelled with the recollection that their experience had demonstrated that the electorate's fidelity was indeed a fickle thing - in 1886 the total destructin of the Party confidently had been predicted and yet now it was achieving a great political victory. Notwithstanding the outward

appearances, this was the last wholly Liberal Government; the party to which Donaldson anRosebery had unreservedly dedicated their political lives was doomed for Liberal fortunes were henceforth to be on an ebbing tide.

The following year the University celebrated the Quincentennary of its foundation. Rosebery,[1] delighting in his rôle as Rector, sailed into St Andrews' mediaeval harbour on his yacht, a form of arrival as novel as it was impressive. At the Pends the horses were unharnessed from his carriage and the students drew their Rector through the town and up the gravel drive to the door of Scores Park. The next day he was installed amidst the never failing hilarity and buoyant spirits of the students. Following the Installation of the Rector and the conferring of honorary degrees - the Prime Minister, Asquith, received an LLD - the Reverend Principal Stewart of St Mary's College presented Donaldson with a congratulatory Address from the Senate marking the happy coincidence that the year was not only the five hundredth anniversary of the University but also the twenty fifth year of Donaldson's Principalship and the eightieth year of his life.

Representatives of more than a hundred Universities throughout the world and members of more than forty learned societies converged on St Andrews for the celebrations. There was another torchlight procession by the students, the presentation to Andrew Carnegie of his portrait, the performance of historical tableaux vivants together with a round of receptions, dinners and parties. The celebrations were

1. He was now Earl of Rosebery and Midlothian, having that year been created a United Kingdom peer. Since during the remainder of his life he never took his seat in the House of Lords, his son, when he succeeded, had to be inducted there as Earl of Midlothian.

a great success but left the University with a deficit amounting to £625, an uncomfortably large sum in 1911. Although Carnegie had already contributed £500 towards the anticipated expenses and undeterred by the circumstances which had caused him to withdraw from the Rectorial election the year before, Donaldson seemingly had no hesitation in writing to Carnegie suggesting that he might donate the sum required to meet the deficit. Carnegie, believing that what was good for one millionaire was good for another and perhaps less than wholly appreciative of the honour of being singled out to pay the University's debts, agreed to meet half the deficit adding that he believed Rector Rosebery would be glad to help with the other half.[1] Whether Carnegie's confidence in this regard was well founded is not recorded. Certainly, as Carnegie clearly believed, Rosebery was the obvious person to approach for his wealth was immense and he was Rector, a rôle which appealed to his vanity in addition to being an acknowledgment of his genuine interest in Universities. What, we may wonder, was there that so distinguished Donaldson's relationships with these two men that he could so readily approach the one for money - even if he were to be snubbed - and yet avoid asking the other, more appropriate, and geographically more accessible friend. Perhaps it was because with Carnegie he had more of a true friendship, rooted in their shared experiences of poor beginnings and the struggle upwards, while with Rosebery Donaldson had blatantly done the running from their earliest acquaintance and created a friendship out of making himself useful - even indispensable - to this wealthy and influential peer. Theirs had been a symbiotic relationship, a friendship where each had his own advantage clearly in sight and when circumstances changed and the mutual benefits gradually

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6209, letter from Andrew Carnegie, 13 September 1912.

disappeared as each needed the other less only the outward form, a shell of a friendship, remained. Donaldson was conscious of the essential inequality of their positions, he might be in Rosebery's world but he would never be of it and if he estimated how far he might presume on their friendship he must have known it was not far enough to ask for money with its attedant risk of being put in his place, or at least what Rosebery believed was his place.

Donaldson had presided over all the varied celebrations with his usual calm and dignified demeanour, charming and hospitable to everyone. It was at times such as these that Mary had been such an asset, her social confidence and good sense equal to any problems, per presence, always so posée, a support he could rely on. No one would ever fill her place but he had found someone, unexpectedly and improbably, who was to become an increasing help and source of happiness to him, in both his private and public lives.

Donaldson had found the loneliness of Castlegate after Margaret's death depressing but the vastness of Scores Park made Mary's loss even more acute. Consequently he had been glad when the opportunity presented itself of offering a home to a young woman in her early twenties, but how and when Cecily Jean Paterson came into his life has always been obscure; one story is that they met in a railway compartment but this seems apocraphyl. Her father, Alexander Stephen Paterson had been born in Edinburgh in 1857, the same year as Donaldson's son, and admitted as an advocate in 1882; in the relatively small legal world of Edinburgh, Alexander Paterson and Jim Donaldson must have known each other. Early in 1884, Paterson married his wife, Eleanor and four years later they went to New Zealand where he practised until his death in 1898, leaving

a widow with three young children, of whom Jean was the eldest.[1]

It can only be surmised that Jean was anxious to return to Scotland, of which she can have had no memory, but she may also have had wider social aspirations than New Zealand, remote on the furthest edge of the Empire, had the potential to fulfil. Her mother had been left in straitened circumstances and the proprieties of the time demanded that any young woman with pretensions to respectability should have some sort of guardian. The Patersons must have known that Jim's father was Principal of the University at St Andrews and the widowed Mrs Paterson may have sought his advice about chaperonage for a daughter determined to return, alone, to Scotland. However they met, it is improbable that their paths crossed by total accident.

It seems that Jean Paterson was living at Scores Park while Mary was alive for she was there in 1908[2]. This may well have begun as a temporary arrangement but with the void in his life created by Mary's death Donaldson was grateful for her presence at home. Jean Paterson was glad to make her home at Scores Park and the arangement suited them both admirably. A mutual affection had soon developed as she increasingly accompanied him to official functions, although shy and retiring, assuming the rôle of châtelaine at Scores Park. Many understood Jean Paterson to be his ward while the Carnegies believed her to be his niece. Such ambiguity can only have arisen from Donaldson never correcting any erroneous assumptions or explaining how Jean came to be with him, perhaps because he could not be bothered but, more probably, because like his own early life, he considered it no one else's business. He did, however, gladly assume the rôle of de facto

1. Jean Paterson was believed to have lost both parents at an early age but Eleanor Paterson lived in New Zealand with her son and younger daughter until her death there at the age of eighty four in 1944.

2. Recollections of Mrs Marjorie Lawson of St Andrews. Mrs Lawson believed she was Donaldson's neice.

guardian which afforded Jean some standing in the community and since her father and Donaldson's son had been exact contemporaries, he may have seen in her the grandchild which fate had denied him.

Although his day was now far spent, these evening years were less a period of lengthening shadows and sombre shades than a sustained sunset glow. Not for him an old age confined to a retrospective vista; he still looked forward, continued to speak and write on educational and political issues, thought as keenly about whatever interested him. If there was no need now for the flame of ambition, the fire of life showed no sign of sinking; he was never bored, never confronted with the painful realisation of being yesterday's man. And he was conscious, too, that age had brought one advantage of which he was not unappreciative, for over the previous decade he had received that deference accorded an aged and learned scholar. In 1907, shortly before he was knighted, the EIS acknowledged his importance in the educational world by making him one of their few Honorary Fellows and the following year Aberdeen University conferred the degree of Doctor of Divinity on its distinguished alumnus, an honour rarely bestowed on someone not ordained. He was much sought after as a speaker, welcomed with affection, listened to with respect and he himself now described as "venerable" and "revered". "Whatever Principal Donaldson has to say on such a subject as education," the Glasgow News had announced expansively in 1905, "is certain to command attention and respectful consideration."[1]

In the early summer of 1912 the Congress of the Universities of the Empire assembled in St Andrews and in the midst of its proceedings Donaldson was given the Freedom of the Burgh in testimony of his valuable

1. Glasgow News, 31 January 1905.

services to Scottish education, his contribution to literature and his work for the University. If this was the highest honour the town could confer it was also the final atonement for the anger, animosity, resentment and distrust which many of the townspeople had harboured against him when he arrived among them a quarter of a century earlier. Many then would not have regretted seeing his Principalship end in failure and ignominy; now they gladly acclaimed his success and eminence for their own. In the Town Hall on 27 June he received the citation in its oak and silver mounted casket. "We shall soon see students coming in aeroplanes,"[1] he remarked jocularly and eveyone roared with laughter.

That September, the British Association held its annual meeing in Dundee and Donaldson addresed the members, choosing as his topic the importance of phonetic spelling in which he had been keenly interested since his early years at Edinburgh High School. Before the nineteenth century there had been, even among the educated, no such thing as standard spelling but as that century progressed there was an increasing emphasis on uniformity. Donaldson opposed this development, remaining a strong partisan of phonetic spelling on the grounds that it offered educational advantages. He believed that the right approach was for teachers not to regard spelling as an important exercise but advocated instead that "everyone should be allowed to speak as he likes, just as Shakespeare did, and just as our ancestors did in early times."[2]

The evidence with which he endeavoured to support this case was typical of the wide range of interests and contacts in education which he maintained as an octogenarian. He had for several years corresponded

1. The Citizen.
2. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Box 11/17.

with a Dundee schoolmaster, George Clark, living at Newport who publicly declared that by utilising a phonetic alphabet he had saved a whole year for his pupils in learning to read and, further, that they had not the slightest difficulty in moving to, and mastering the unphonetic spelling that was demanded. Be that as it may, Donaldson did not believe that any such transition should be necessary but that the phonetic spelling should be used for life. He regarded the accepted spelling as abnormal and was confident that in time the world would come to demand a phonetic alphabet for all its books. He urged that a phonetic system limited to forty symbols be adopted and assured his learned audience that a child having mastered the symbols could with only a little practice read any work in the language.

Donaldson realised how revolutionary a change he was recommending and that such a U-turn in education was never likely to be considered. Yet this was not some mad cap idea for an address delivered as a divertissement but a theory which had exercised his mind now for half a century. If he had doubts that his ideas would be seriously considered by the Association's members he was certainly no moral coward. The press, however, accorded him gratifying coverage, some going so far as to print the relevant heading phonetically which ensured the article catching the reader's attention.

Donaldson had interested Carnegie in phonetic spelling and found an enthusiastic supporter but one who at the same time tempered his enthusiasm with a realistic appreciation of what might be achieved. "No doubt a Phonetic Alphabet would be perfection," he wrote Donaldson in 1906, "but I am persuaded that there is no way but the long and

toilsome one of step by step improving the words we have."[1] By 1912 Donaldson was still trying to interest Carnegie in a wholly phonetic system of spelling but the latter believed that although our spelling was "disgraceful" it could only be changed slowly. "We cannot expect the busy English speaking world to introduce a spelling involving a new alfabet."[2] (As a step in this direction Carnegie would write his letters substituting "f" for "ph".) He was, however, as generous as ever and in 1911 Donaldson had persuaded him to contribute £1,000 a year for the following three years to the Simplified Spelling Society in which Donaldson was involved. In 1914 Carnegie agreed to continue his contribution for a further three years, Donaldson assuring him that the Society was doing splendidly and that at the end of the period would be self supporting,[3] but simplified spelling was to be an early war casualty.

This was not Donaldson's only contribution to the Association's meeting; he also addressed the members of its Education Section when, predictably, his subject was the Scotch Education Department. Time had done nothing to assuage his grievances against the Department or to reconcile him to its treatment of Scottish education. In fact recent events had proved the last straw. In 1907 the Scottish Universities appealed to the Government for an increase in their grant. The Government's response was to establish a Departmental Committee to examine their finances and its Report in 1910 revealed how dependent they were on public funds. The Committee recommended that the grant be increased but exacted its price. At this time the Universities still operated

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6881, letter from Andrew Carnegie, 12 October 1906.
2. Ibid; Ms 6194, letter from Andrew Carnegie, 6 September 1912.
3. Ibid: Ms 6201, letter from Andrew Carnegie, 23 January 1914.

the system, hallowed by immemorial custom, whereby the students paid a separate fee for each subject, a system the Government now demanded be abolished and replaced with an inclusive fee. That the Carnegie Trust had deprecated the archaic system and urged its abandonment for a number of years did nothing to reconcile the Universities to the goverment's demand. Donaldson was furious, seeing this move as an assault on University independence and his ire was sharpened by his dealing with Treasury officials whom he was convinced were Tories set on undermining the Liberal Government. In this unequal struggle the Universities were foredoomed to be the losers for the Government, if it were to pay the piper, admitted of no argument why it should not also call the tune. The Universities resolved to hold out but by 1912 sheer financial necessity - faced with University obduracy, the Government had declined to hand over the full grant - compelled them to concede defeat.

Donaldson argued that in Scotland State support for the Universities always had been accepted as a duty and that in the past they had been entrusted to expend the grants without the closer supervision which the Government was now bent on imposing. This much was true but his argument conveniently overlooked that in 1858 and again in 1889 Parliament had granted increased funds only at the price of changes in the government of the Universities, including outside representation, and the actual amount had been decided largely by executive commissions on which University representation was conspicuously absent. Thus during the latter half of the nineteenth century the State had exerted successfully, by its control of the purse strings, an indirect, but nonetheless powerful force, in matters that might readily be considered to infringe academic freedom, such as the entrance examination and

the structure of the curriculum. The demand for the abolition of separate fees and their replacement by an inclusive fee was in reality an inevitable continuation of this process for both the trend and the means to ensure compliance had readily identifiable ancestries in the previous century. This latest controversy, besides exasperating Donaldson, was however to have an important consequence for his political thinking. It converted him to a fervent Scottish Nationalist.

During these years Scottish nationalism became his principal political interest, giving expression to his support for a separate Scottish Parliament which he had advocated in the Universities Review in 1907. Although in 1914 he was to claim that he had been a Home Ruler for over sixty years[1] he was not actively working for Home Rule until after the turn of the century. Indeed there was no Home Rule movement as such until Gladstone announced his conversion to Home Rule for Ireland and, unavoidably, its logical extension to Scotland. There had been the Society for the Vindication of Scottish Rights[2] and the agitation culminating in the establishment of the Scottish Office in 1885: Donaldson had no association with the former and his participation in the latter was motivated by his dedication to promoting Rosebery's political career - it was the means to an end and the latter was the more important. In any case, like most prominent Liberals, Rosebery always had been distinctly unenthusiastic about Home Rule for Scotland and Donaldson evidently had been content to follow his lead. Further he rested his support for Home Rule on personal experiences subsequent to him becoming involved in educational reform. Such circumstantial evidence does not preclude, but is independent of, an emotional attachment to

1. Evening News, Edinburgh, 26 February 1914.
2. The Society had a short, but not unimportant life, being disbanded in 1856.

the restoration of Scottish independence, often expressive of youthful idealism rather than any objective political connection. That he claimed to have been a supporter of Home Rule for so long, with the inference of active involveent for the cause, was because it suited him now to project back in time his political commitment to Home Rule.

Before the accession of the Liberals to power in the summer of 1886, few voices were raised in Scotland for Home Rule and when Donaldson was a young man it was not even considered a peripheral political issue for it was widely and confidently believed that Scotland had adequate means of securing all the legislative changes she might seek - given time - through the activities of the Scottish MPs in London. This picture was completely changed when Gladstone acknowledged Ireland's claim for Home Rule; if Ireland's right to Home Rule was recognized by the Government so, equally, could Scotland's; a logical corollary which Gladstone could not deny, especially when the Liberal Party relied heavily on Scotland's electoral support. Consequently Gladstone invited Scotland and Wales to reconsider their position within the United Kingdom and to contemplate the union being replaced with a federal structure.

The Scottish Home Rule Association was promptly founded in Edinburgh in 1886 and feelings on the subject rapidly mounted in Liberal Associations throughout Scotland. This did not take long to find corporate expression, for in 1888 the Conference of Scottish Liberal Associations resolved that Home Rule should be granted to Scotland and that the Scottish people should be given some control and management of their own national affairs. However, although Home Rule never ceased to be Liberal policy in Scotland, and indeed in the circumstances could not be totally ignored, Liberal Party leaders were always noticably

cool in their support. This nominal, as opposed to active support, at the top, ensured that by 1910, almost a quarter of a century later, no real progress had been made towards achieving Home Rule.

In that year the Scottish National Committee, comprising all Scottish MPs, agreed to press for Home Rule and in August the same year issued a manifesto recognizing that if this were to be translated from political theory to reality, widespread support was insufficient. There was now established in May 1913 a Scottish Home Rule Committee, an ad hoc committee of existing Liberal organisations throughout Scotland and an International Scots Home Rule Association; the inclusion of "International" was calculated to secure financial support from North America. The Association undertook to publish pamphlets dealing with a number of spearate issues, such as education setting out why Home Rule was necessary for Scotland. Donaldson was invited to be the Senior Honorary President of the Association which founded its own journal, the Scottish Nation, in November 1913[1]

Donaldson contributed a pamphlet "Home Rule and Scottish Education" reviewing how Socttish Education had suffered from the ill informed meddling south of the Border. From the earliest days of his involvement in educational reform, he had been left in no doubt about how little in general was either known to understood in England of conditions in Scotland or of the distinct features of her educational institutions. The ignorance of Scotland which he had encountered among politicians and civil servants in London at first caused him disbelief but soon turned to anger. "The person (responsible for Scottish education)

1. Being Senior President distinguished him from the Honorary Presidents who numbered over forty.

was an Englishman whose ignorance of Scottish affairs was notorious"[1], Donaldson maintained and after a visit to London about the University grant declared, "those whom I saw seemed singularly ignorant of Scotch Universities, their history and constitution, and this was especially the case with regard to St Andrews."[2]

His conversion was not due to any sudden access to facts earlier hidden from him. Rather it resulted from a gradual realisation that expectations of legislative change through Scottish parliamentary representation were unrealistic. This was partly due to a general reluctance among Scottish MPs to exert themselves over matters of education which they believed had little prospect of success and would not necessarily increase their standing in their own constituencies. Donaldson often had travelled to London to represent the interests of some aspect of Scottish education to be met with an humiliating and off hand reception. On one such occasion - he remembered it all his life - after impressing on a member of the Government that Scotland was better prepared than England for educational reform, he was stung by the curt response, "We don't intend to do anything for you; wait until we make up to you."[3] In retrospect it appeared to him that the history of educational reform in Scotland was one of lost opportunities and continual delays resulting from the legislature's lack of interest in, or understanding of, Scotland's educational system.

That he did not raise his voice or wield his pen in the cause of Home Rule during the late eighties or the nineties can be ascribed

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 13/6. "The Scottish Nation" Pamphlets No. 1. James Donaldson, Home Rule and Scottish Education Although undated, this first pamphlet probably appeared late in 1913 or early the following year.
2. Ibid: p.43.
3. Evening News, Edinburgh, 26 February, 1914.

to this being a policy neither favoured nor encouraged by prominent Liberals in Scotland; Rosebery viewed with dismay the prospect of devolution and at this period what was Rosebery policy was, by definition Donaldson policy also. By the first decade of the new century, however, much had changed; his relationship with Rosebery - politically almost a dependence - now amounted to little more than the annual letter and gift of a brace of pheasants; the tiresome feuding over the union with Dundee had been resolved and, after Mary' death, the social life at Scores Park inevitably contracted. The invitation to become involved in the International Scots Home Rule Association came at an opportune time, when he was grateful for a new platform and gratified that at his age his participation was still valued.

Donaldson's attachment to Home Rule was rational, not emotional, arising from a genuine belief born of long experience of trying to effect changes through a Parliament in London. He often encountered ignorance of Scotland and indifference to her institutions and he had been irritated, exasperated and angry. He advocated Home Rule because quite simply he was convinced it was the better course for Scotland. That it was a conversion of the mind rather than the heart is apparent from the nature of his assistance to the movement. He confined himself to speaking and writing on Home Rule in the context of education, on which he was acknowledged an authority and was never seduced into becoming involved in other areas in which he was less well informed. The International Scots Home Rule Association, to which Donaldson gave such enthusiasic support, was destined to flourish for only a brief day for it quietly died a little over a year after being founded when attention was diverted to winning a war.

In early April 1913 Donaldson travelled to Oxford to spend a month at Quarry House. He was over eighty now and although he met the closer presence of Time's winged chariot with a gentle fortitude he was nonetheless conscious of the weight of his years. He had remained remarkably hale and active but Oxford was a long journey from St Andrews; he had endeavoured to sell the house with no more success than when he and Mary had tried to find a buyer after Sam and Caroline moved to Whatley Rectory. Indeed it was now more difficult for the open land in front of the house affording the vista of Oxford's dreaming spires had been developed; as mean Edwardian red brick semis spawned along Quarry Road the view was obliterated. Not only was Quarry House now facing these inferior little houses set in their cramped gardens but it was inconveniently far from Oxford station. To no avail, the estate agent remonstrated that he was asking too high a price. Financially, however, Donaldson had no need to sell and between leases he would sometimes stay in the house himself. He had added another bedroom at the rear but plans for a library, although drawn up, were never carried out.

He loved Oxford and being at Quarry House which had been Mary's creation and was imbued even yet with her personality; the garden too, no less than the house, retained the imprint of her hand for here, as at Scores Park, she had created an extensive garden, her enthusiasm and knowledge finding full scope in taming the wild glebe land. His head might tell him to sell but his heart was reluctant to part with this place that held so many associations with Mary.1

1. Following its sale in the spring of 1915, Quarry house had a varied history. Although occupied for some time by an Italian countess, the property steadily deteriorated, until when the present owner bought the house soon after the Second World War there were "about a hundred Irish" living in it.

April was yet cold on the east coast of Scotland but already burgeoning spring lay over Oxfordshire. By now, much passion spent, he was content on sunny days to sit in the garden, basking in remembered summers, and to visit friends around the University. Among his contemporaries the reaper had taken a heavy toll but proximity to age had never been of consequence in his friendships - his interest in people of all ages and the total naturalness of his manner ensured that new and diverse friends were always entering his life. One of these was the young Lotte Lehmann whom he had met in St Andrews the previous year. She adored this elderly Principal, so sympathetic and encouraging, who readily communicated his belief in her talent. Now while he was enjoying the spring at Quarry House she wrote from Gorlitz with good wishes for his birthday, enclosing her photograph - he had already sent her one of himself - and engagingly assuring him "I have very great longing to you . . . I am ever with my love."[1] The birthday greetings might be a little late and the English imperfect but the sincerity and affection were evident and made him feel less than his eighty two years.

That same month he received a letter from Caroline, whose home Quarry House had once been, penned at the Vicarage at Whatley where she and Sam were still living. She declared that he had "ceased entirely to take any interest"[2] in Mary's family and announced that she would never write to him again. His interest in Caroline and Sam had been an extension of his interest in Mary, when she died so did did his interest in them. The reason however was deeper than this implies

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6798, letter from Lotte Lehman, 12 April, 1913.
2. Ibid: Ms 6717, letter from Caroline Riddell Webster, 17 April 1913.

for he had remained on affectionate terms with both Margaret's brothers after her death, always seeing them when in London until John died in 1900 and James the following year, and thereafter with their children. His relationship with his step-son had never been more than superficial - Mary often went alone to Quarry House and there is no reference in his diaries to Sam and Caroline being at Scores Park. While initially sympathetic to Sam's nervous maladies he had lost patience with someone, spoilt and pampered, whose temperament was so at variance with his own. Sam's nervous deterioration had become increasingly pronounced and his part in this severance appears to have been passive, if not supine. Yet one suspects that both he and his aunt, bred within the strong Victorian concepts of class, considered that after her first two marriages, the third time Mary had definitely married down. "I am afraid money bought you even in the years when you seemed to belong to Sam and me,"[1] was Caroline's parting shot. Donaldson must have been deeply wounded by the unmistakable inference that he had married Mary for her money. Both he and Mary had married for very practical considerations: socially she had been a great asset to him and he had offered Mary a state which only marriage could provide and on which she utilised her talents to notable advantage but it was a stage on which they could never have given the production they did had it not been for Mary's income. There was nothing discreditable in this; they were both sufficiently experienced to recognise what would make a successful marriage, each had brought to the union something which complemented what the other had to offer. If any vindication were necessary it was clearly manifested in the devotion each had borne the other.

1. Ibid.

Caroline had terminated what relationship yet remained because 'I know that her (Mary's) spirit is not in accord with your spirit in your present attitude."[1] That she had been anxious to preserve a relationship for which Donaldson had shown no inclination or enthusiasm and that she was ultimately so bitter, culminating in the charge that money determined his actions, may have been due to her interest in the property, notably Quarry House, which Mary had bequeathed to Donaldson with no restraint on how he might dispose of it. It seems likely that she had endeavoured - and failed - to persuade him that Mary's property should revert to her family, arguing that this was what Mary would have wished and intended: that Mary's bequest had been in the nature only of a life interest. Since the circumstances of this estrangement had been some time in developing, it is improbable that Caroline's letter can have greatly surprised Donaldson and it is equally unlikely that he allowed it to trouble him.

Of recent years he had given up much of the social round which formerly he had so conspicuously enjoyed. In the early summer after leaving Quarry House, perhaps with the realisation that life might be running out, he decided to go to the High Commissioner's Dinner at Holyrood and went to London for a dinner given by the Secretary of State for Scotland to mark the King's Birthday followed by a reception at the India Office which brought back recollections of such occasions now long past when Lord and Lady Rosebery had received the guests.[1] While in London he attended a meeting of the Carnegie Memoral Trust in the Hotel Metropole on July 22. Carnegie was very much alive and still ever generous and it had been decided that a public memorial should be organised. Donaldson was a member of the Committee which

1. NLS: Rosebery Papers, Ms 10014/215, letter to Lord Rosebery, 2 July 1913.

decided that this should take the form of a statue in the Palace of Peace at the Hague. He remained amusing company and advancing years had not impaired his ability to charm all ages; as the last year of peace drew to its close he was taking the de‿dicated Liberal acolyte, Violet Asquith, in to dinner at Kilmaron Castle near Cupar.

The year, 1913, when Rosebery's term as Rector ended, his successor was another of Donaldson's old Liberal friends, Lord Aberdeen. He had seen little of the Aberdeens over the past twenty years for a lengthy Governor Generalship of Canada was followed in 1905 by his appointment for the second time as Viceroy of Ireland. Aberdeen's first Viceroyalty in 1886 had ended abruptly with the Liberal defeat five months later but this time it was to be for ten years. Unlike Johnnie, who had become shankly with age, Ishbel had acquired a redoubtable fullness and as Vicereign applied herself to good works and spending money with equal enthusiam

When the students left St Andrews in the spring of 1914 they had no reason to believe that anything would be changed when they returned in the autumn. But in that beautiful summer great events were destined to take place. There had been a Balkan War in 1912 when Russian agents encouraged the Balkan States - Serbia, Monenegro, Greece and Bulgaria - to sink their differences and take the offensive against Turkey but few outside the Chancelleries of Europe realised how close had been an all-engulfing conflict in that winter of 1912-13; the Balkans were beyond most people's definition of Europe, regarded it as an area of endemic political instability and ethnic conflict. Peace of a sort had been restored but Serbia emerged as a proven military power after the expulsion of the Turks from Macedonia and Thrace and her ambitions

would not now be satisfied until all Yugo-Slavs had been emancipated from Austrian rule. The region had for so long been one where crisis followed crisis that when the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo, hit the headlines with the murder of an Austrian Archduke in late June 1914 there was a general belief that this was just another example of the sort of thing that happened in that part of the world. The escalation of events took people by surprise; when on 29 July two monitors from the Austro-Hungarian flotilla on the Danube shelled the fortress of Belgrade the first shots had been fired in a major conflagration and on 4 August Britain became committed to a European war.

Although now eighty three, Donaldson was caught up in the enthusiasm and patriotism of the hour. Born in the first year of William IV's reign, in the span of his long life Britain had never been involved in a major confrontation with another European power. The Crimean War had been fought when he was Rector at Stirling sixty years before; it had been a geographically remote and limited conflict and although throughout his life, which had seen such tremendous commercial and territorial expansion for the British Empire, there had been no shortages of skirmishes and local wars in India and Britain's colonies and dependencies which encircled the globe, her foreign policy had successfully avoided any military intervention in Europe. The circumstances of 1914 were unprecedented in his life time and his response matched the national mood that was being given vociferous expression throughout the country. Donaldson was confident that the nation was fighting a righteous cause which would be vindicated by speedy victory. "You will be home", the Kaiser assured his troops in August "before the leaves have fallen from the trees".[1] And of that the allies were equally

1. A. Palmer, The Kaiser, (Lond., 1978), p.175.

sure. One of the first indications Donaldson had that events would upset the even tenor of his life was when, three weeks after war was declared, he received a letter from the Carnegies with the news that they were returning early to America; the left England on the Mauretania on 19 September and the Principals' Week, an annual event at Skibo since 1901, was cancelled. Donaldson would never see Andrew and Louise Carnegie again.[1]

Donaldson's posture at this time is not a little surprising; age and experience of life - and no one could suggest that he had received short measure of either - tend to make old men cautious. In Donaldson these factors were conjoined with an educated mind and a personal knowledge of Germany which might have afforded him a calmer, more realistic and independent judgment than that of the average man. Yet this was not the case and neither did these factors give him the perception to recognize that circumstances clearly differentiated this war from all Britain's previous military engagements. That the war would be of glory and valour he did not doubt as the students returned. When Donaldson opened the session on 12 October the mood was set before he arrived in the packed hall, the students enthusiastically singing one of their favourite choruses of the day, to the tune of Old King Cole, ending with the lines,

> "None can compare
> With the boys of the O.T.C."[2]

1. Although the United States did not enter the War until April 1917, Carnegie like Donaldson had always expressed admiration of Germany. He wrote to Donaldson in 1907 after a visit to Germany: "I had three interviews with the German Emperor and dined with him twice. - a wonderful man, so bright, humorous, and with a sweet smile. I think he can be trusted and he declared himself for peace." St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Ms 6184, letter from Andrew Carnegie, 3 July 1907.
2. St Andrews Citizen, 17 October 1914.

This was the twenty eighth time he had addressed the University at the start of another session and never in all these years had his mood so exactly matched that of the students. And he told them exactly what they wanted to hear. "The aim (of the War) is so fraught with grand results," he confidently asserted, "that I think every one of you wishes he take an active part in the warfare . . . I do not know that any young man who has any spirit in him and strength of body for the work should shrink from taking part. If he does I am quite sure he will regret it all his life and blame himself for not having made a vigorous effort to get into the service."[1]

This sort of thing might be popular with his audience but the fact remained that war with Germany presented Donaldson with a problem - ever since spending that now far distant summer of 1852 with Peter Bayne in Germany he had held up for admiration, as an ideal to be striven for, the theories of German educationalists, the structure and administratn of German educational institutions, the training and culture of German teachers and Professors, and the close interest which the German Government took in all of these. He had so frequently compared - unfavourably - aspects of Scottish schools and Universities, teacher training and Government administration with the German.[2] On 5 February 1876, when he had been Editor of The Educational News for less than two months, he devoted his editorial to "German and Scotch Schools" - in German there were no pupil teachers, no Code, no payment by results - and it was a theme to which he returned tirelessly through the years. Indeed one is easily persuaded that some aspect of German education was

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 13/22, Address 12 October 1914, p.5.
2. In his twenty five Addresses between 1886 and 1911 the index lists no fewer than 44 separate references to Germany and her institutions. James Donaldson, University Addresses, (Edin., 1911).

a useful backstop for any address. As recently as the previous year, when there had been increasing concern for some years among educated and political circles in Britain at the militarism which dominated German society, at the high level of naval and army expenditure and the brittle nature of Anglo-German political relations, he declaimed that German Universities and secondary Schools had been "a most important influence amidst the nations of the world and in the building up of a great Empire."[1] He confined his comparative remarks about Germany to the educational sphere but to be at war with a country whose educational institutions he had publicly lauded so often, and declared should be emulated, suddenly was embarrassing. He endeavoured to extricate himself by distinguishing German from Prussian, although he had never suggested such a distinction at any time in the past. "The Prussians have degenerated in intellectual power . . . " he claimed, "this absolute subjection of men, even with powerful intellects, produces a deadening influence on the mind."[2]

The only evidence advanced of this degeneracy of Prussian intellectual capacity was the German state being at war with Britain but for the sake of his argument he could very neatly divide Germany: "The Junkers, or Prussian Magnates, are singularly destitute of culture . . ." a startlingly sweeping and unqualified generalisation for Donaldson, "The German culture . . . took its origins and had its growth solely in the Kingdoms and Princedoms which were outside Prussia . . . German education as established by them before the German Empire existed is a splendid effort of the human mind, and their literature stands out as one of the most prominent literatures of all the ages and a treasure for all ages to come."[3]

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, 13/22, Address by Sir James Donaldson, 12 October 1914.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

By this means did he strive to salvage the moral validity of his admiration for German culture. The speciousness of the reasoning must have been apparent to him and it is a sad reflection that, as part of this total and often unreasoning hatred of everything German or even having an association with Germany, which swept the country, he should have identified himself to such an extent with hysterical public feeling. "I hope you will not be carried away by wild antipathies," he told the students belatedly as he ended his Address, "but hope that we shall yet some to friendly terms with the great body of sensible German people."[1] This rational and moderate tone was much more like Donaldson but having urged - even shamed - the students to hasten to the Front such a plea for friendship and understanding with the German people sounds hollow and inconsistent. No sooner had he closed his Address with an expression of sympathy for the University of Louvain whose priceless library had been totally destroyed by German bomabardment, than the students, more interested in the war as they imagined it than Louvain's loss, struck up "It's a long way to Tipperary." The St Andrews Citizen caught the tenor of the Address and the spirit in which it was received when it observed that to "the outsider all this may seem incongruous at an academic gathering, but to those present, the singing of a soldier's popular song appeared quite a fitting conclusion to an address on the war."[2]

But the euphoria was not to last. As autumn deepened into winter the reality of the war became the muddy trenches and blasted earth stretching in the cold and wet from the Swiss border to the bleak Belgian coast. It soon became apparent that this war would not be over

1. Ibid.
2. The Citizen, 17 October, 1914.

by Christmas; the appalling casualty lists lengthened and the unbridled optimism yielded to chilling disillusionment. While the jeunesse dorée of a generation was being squandered amidst the blowing poppies and barbed wire of Flanders, Donaldson must have remembered his exhortation that the students should lay down their books for the battlefield.

During this first winter of the war, life in St Andrews was pursued with a brave semblance of normality. Although he would be eighty four in the spring, Donaldson had abdicated none of his responsibilities as Principal and despite its situation ensuring that St Andrews was often cold and damp, he ventured out every day to attend to the University's affairs. In old age his courtly suavity never deserted him and his capacity for smoothing over differences of opinion still made his presence invaluable on many occasions. At meetings he was sometimes inclined now to doze through tedious debates but nothing escaped his notice, nor could anything be put over him more readily than in former days. He retained a pride in his scholarship and at the Court or Senate occasionally would allow himself the little vanity of mildly correcting any member who fancied himself in Latin or Greek.[1] He presided as usual when the Court met on 13 February and although he had a cold and went home to bed, no one was unduly concerned, confident that as alway before, his hardy consitution would carry him through. This time, however, he was to be granted no speedy recovery. He lay in the hushed stillness of Scores Park while outside the chill air was rent with the cries of the gulls as they swooped and wheeled over the mansion and the restless winter sea broke against the cliffs below. The lengthening days slowly passed. As the daffodils which Mary lovingly had

1. St Andrews UL: W.C. McIntosh, unpublished autobiography, p.268.

planted broke anew through the cold earth betokening the coming of another spring, Donaldson's tide of life ebbed gently away. In the evening of Tuesday, 10 March, exactly three weeks after his last Court meeting, he died.

Tributes to a remarkable life poured into St Andrews - from former High School boys and students now spread over the world, from other Universities and prominent men in all walks of life. Asquith, now increasingly lazy and easy going and temperamentally unsuited to the vigorous prosecution of a war, spoke of his sorrow "at the death of my old and much valued friend."[1] Principal Herkless of St Mary's college, who was to succeed now to the Principalship of the University, invited Marie Corelli to stay with him for the funeral, explaining to Jean that he thought Miss Corelli would be more than she cope with at Scores Park. Herkless was no doubt right for, since Donaldson had first met her more than half a century earlier, Miss Corelli had become - measured by sales - the greatest novelist England had ever known; counting Queen Victoria amongst her most avid readers, her following was phenomenal. As with countless young people, Donaldson had never failed to give her encouragement and to convey his belief in her ability and during the years of heady fame she always remembered how much his support had meant to her in the days when she was yet unknown. They were both authors but their writing could not have been more different; Donaldson's acclaimed as valuable contributions to learning, Marie Corelli's, novels combining her highly personal interpretation of the mystical and psychical, generously overlaid with fervent religiosity. Miss Corelli, never doubting her stature as a writer, made no distinction between the inimitable style of The Sorrows of Satan or The Life

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Executory Papers, telegram from H.H. Asquith.

Everlasting and that of her correspondence. She thanked Herkless for his invitation, "- But I could not bear it! - I loved him dearly - and he was always so good and sweet to me from the first days . . . - and it's not very long ago that I had the sweetest letter from him . . . I am sending some lilies and violets in a wreath for his last rest - I do hope Miss Paterson will put them in his coffin and let them go down into the grave with him! . . . I have lost one of the kindest and dearest friends I ever had . . ."[1] None could match her effusive style but there were many who, like Marie Corelli, remembered Donaldson less as a scholar and University Principal than for the man he was, his sincere and unaffected manner, practical common sense, and the infinite kindness and generosity of his nature.

The following Saturday his oak coffin lay in the chancel of Universite Chapel. So large was the throng of mourners that the Chapel could not accommodate them all any many stood outside listening to those within singing The Lord's My Shepherd and Now the Labourer's Task if O'er. The funeral procession stretched from the Chapel to the east end of Market Street, the Professors and Lecturers of the University and the numerous representatives of other Universities and educational institutions in their academic gowns forming a large part of the procession. "A grouping of beautiful colours that had little suggestive of sorrow in it," the Citizen described the scene, "but a dignity and richness that was expressive of the honour that was being done a great scholar at the natural ending of a finely rounded off life."[2] Students

1. St Andrews UL: Donaldson Papers, Glasgow Papers, Box 14/19, letter from Marie Corelli to Principal Herkless, March 1915.
2. The Citizen, 16 March 1915.

shouldered the coffin down the nave of the ruined Cathedral to that part of the green and hallowed precinct known as Divinity Corner where both Margaret and Mary already lay.

Surely, had he left a valediction, it might have been in the spirit of Rosebery's words when installed as Rector:

> Be of good cheer . . . I have seen life and death and glory chasing each other like shadows on a summer sea, and all has seemed to be vanity. But I remain in the conviction that, though individuals may suffer, when we take stock of a century at its end, we shall find that the world is better and happier than it was at the beginning. Sursum corda. Life up your hearts, for the world is moving onward. It is guided from above, and guided we may be sure with wisdom and goodness which will not abandon us. That is the comfort which even in blackest darkness must afford light. 1.

1. Lord Rosebery, Rectorial Address, St. Andrews, 14 September 1911.

# EPILOGUE

In his will Donaldson remembered all his old servants at Scores Park, the sum depending on the number of years each had been with him. In Mary's memory he endowed a prize to be awarded to a handicapped student. All his books and papers he bequeathed to the University with the sole exception of the letters he had received from Rosebery and from Hannah, dead now for a quarter of a century. Everything else he left to Jean Paterson[1] who sold Quarry House a few months later, and, after selecting the items she wished to keep from Scores Park, the remaining contents were sold by public roup.

Donaldson's life corresponded with an extraordinary exactitude to the hey day of the Liberal Party in Scotland. He had been born the year before the great Reform Act of 1832 won for the Liberals the enduring gratitude and fidelity of the Scottish electorate and only two months after his death the last wholly Liberal administration ended when Asquith restructured his Government as a coalition. Unable any longer to disguise the absence of a broad ideological base, from this time the fortunes of the party lurched irretrievably downwards: rent by bitter internal schisms, exacerbated by discordant personalities, and confronted by an increasingly strong and confident Labour Party, it was unable to define a meaningful policy for the emergent post war world with its profound social and economic changes. To his Liberal friends fate proved no kinder. Before Donaldson's death Haldane had been mercilessly defamed, lampooned and hounded from office for his admiration of German culture which he had for so long consistently

1. In 1917 Jean Paterson married the eminent historian, J.D. Mackie, (1887-1978), Lecturer in Modern History at St Andrews (1908-26), Professor of Modern History, University of London (1926-30), Professor of Scottish History and Literature, at Univ. of Glasgow (1930-57), and Historiographer Royal in Scotland. Jean Paterson died in 1976.

and unreservedly advertised. When in May 1915 Asquith restructured the Government, Haldane found himself cast into the political wilderness, there to sojourn until finding a political home in the Labour camp, being appointed Lord Chancellor in the first Labour Government. Asquith lost his brilliant eldest son, Raymond, on the Somme in September 1916, his premiership to Lloyd George when the latter formed his first coalition three months later and his seat in the 1919 Khaki Election, the East Fife constituency he had represented since entering Parliament over thirty years before. And Rosebery, by now more than ever out of sympathy with the times, was to lose his adored and gifted younger son - he who as a little boy had found sanctuary with the Donaldsons at Scores Park when his mother was dying - in Palestine in 1917. With Neil's death, the tristesse which had marked Rosebery since Hannah's death deepened in irremediable sorrow. A month before the Armistice he suffered a stroke which seriously and permanently incapacitated him, exising rather than living until his death in 1929, forgotten by the political world. Only the Aberdeens succeeded in retaining into advanced old age the exuberant joie de vivre which had made the Haddo house parties of the eighteen eighties so memorable. Early in 1916 Aberdeen's long years of public service were acknowledged when he was created Marquess of Aberdeen and Temair. Always living beyond their means with a reckless disregard for the cost, the vast Aberdeen estates which, when he came into his inheritance, had stretched to 75,000 acres progressively had been sold until only 15,000 remained and Haddo itself denuded as everything of value disappeared to the sale rooms. Leaving Haddo to their eldest son they retired to the House of Cromar, which Aberdeen proceeded to sell lock, stock and barrel, reserving a life tenancy to himself. The terrible reckoning came in

1934 when at 87 Aberdeen died and the MacRoberts Trustees, exercising their right, insisted that Ishbel, who lived until 1939, vacate the house and leave every piece of furniture behind.

The world which Donaldson had known and which had shaped his life was passing away. The Great War was to prove a potent catalyst of social and economic change. For the landed nobility life would never be the same again; with incomes sharply reduced from death duties and increased taxation, their social and political impact on national life steadily waned. The great country houses and the life which centred on them - witness to the British genius for Verschmelzung, that peculiar power of environment and tradition - ceased to play the conspicuous part in public affairs which had formerly been theirs or to exercise a dominating influence on society. Change was further accelerated by the final extensions of the franchise and the widening concepts of democracy. The influence which enabled Rosebery to promote Donaldson's career with such supreme indifference to the claims of others was to be incompatible, indeed intolerable, to the new society. Influence of course would survive but the future endeavoured to offer greater justice to those whom providence denied a patron. Equality was to be the political philosophy and not least in access to opportunity.

As the subject of such patronage, Donaldson attracted often bitter and sustained attacks but he is not accountable for the manner in which the society of his age functioned any more than it can be held to his charge that he showed a keen eye for the main chance, for taking advantage of the opportunities which the system afforded him. That patronage could present an unattractive, even an ugly, face should not be allowed

to detract from the value of his work and the achievements of his long life, for justice demands that a man be judged in the context of his day, according to the conventions, attitudes and values of the period. Victorian preoccupation with purity of heart and soul comfortably accommodated the exigencies which patronage demanded if it were to be manipulated to one's advantage: concessions to contemporary mores were unconsciously rationalised.

Donaldson's influence in the Liberal Party is largely forgotten today, erased by the torrent of subsequent political history, but his contribution towards the shaping of modern Scottish education at all levels has proved more enduring and none can owe him a greater debt of gratitude than St Andrews University. "In the estimation of some capable of judging," the press acknowledged on the morning following his death, "it is not too much to say that, had it not been for the wisdom and tact exercised by the Principal . . . St Andrews University would in all probability have been known to future generations only in name."[1] He had been the most influential figure in the University for almost three decades, an important formative period witnessing the transition of a mediaeval University to a respected centre of twentieth century scholarship. That this ancient seat of learning, a lamp first illuminating the darkness enshrouding fifteenth century Scotland, survived with renewed vigour is a lasting testimony to his labours, an achievement which neither time can efface nor posterity belittle.

1. Glasgow Herald, 10 March 1915.

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